EXCLUSIVE! THE BREAKUP OF EPMD

THE SOURCE

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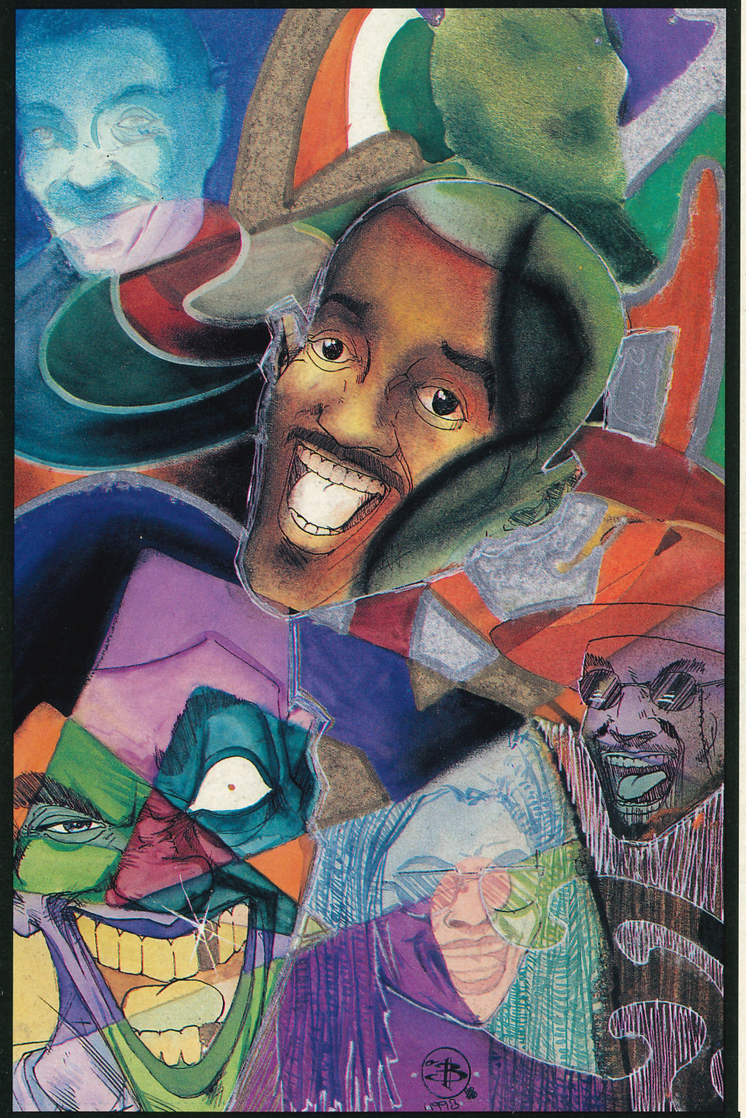
FEATURES

32 DIGABLE PLANETS
"Digging The Planets"
At the intersection of classic hip-hop, retro-jazz and deep thought chills three insects from outer space who have made a lifestyle out of being cool like 'dat. Touré envisions a digable scene way back in the future while SOURCE photographer Suekwon captures the Planets in a natural habitat: the legendary jazz club The Village Gate.

40 HEAVY D
"Cool Blue"
Unwilling to let the ever-evolving hip-hop scene pass him by, Heavy D comes correct with his fourth album *Blue Funk*—sticking close to the roots by sticking close to his heart. Elyse Chance chats with the Overweight Lover and identifies his secrets for continued success.

46 HIP-HOP COMEDY SPECIAL
A special section of THE SOURCE documenting the current explosion of Black cutting-edge comedy into the mainstream, including coverage of: Martin Lawrence, The Russell Simmons Def Comedy Jam, Richard Pryor, Paul Mooney, Reggie McFadden, David Chappelle, Tony Woods, The Uptown Comedy Club, The Los Angeles stand-up scene, a guide to "your mother" jokes and more. More fun in 13 pages than humans should be allowed to have.

64 THE BREAKUP OF EPMD
"Out Of Business"
Hip-hop fans were shocked and saddened by the recent announcement that EPMD was calling it quits and their seemingly impenetrable crew the Hit Squad was in a shambles. For this exclusive Source report, Reginald C Dennis went beyond the rumors to get the real story straight from Parrish Smith, K-Solo, Redman and Das EFX. Was the apparent unity of the Hit Squad actually a bridge over troubled water?



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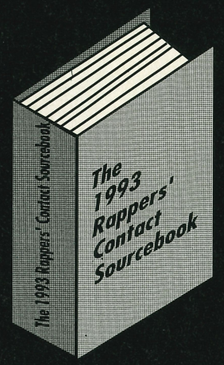

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PUBLISHER'S CREDO: We at THE SOURCE take very seriously the challenge of being the only independent voice for the Hip-Hop Nation. We strive hard to bring the reader a complete and unbiased representation of this incredible art form and all that surrounds it. With this in mind, we feel that it is important for our readers to be aware of the nature of our relationships with the rap industry.

We engage in business transactions with companies that are part of the rap music industry on two basic levels. Obviously, we accept advertising from such companies. Secondly, we at times are contracted by record companies to aid in the promotion of their product outside the direct channels of the magazine.

With respect to any of our business relationships, we feel it is our responsibility always to strictly police the integrity of our editorial content. Only in this way can we continue to bring to you the clear and unbiased coverage which we hope has won the respect of all of our readers.

My dad's a gangster.

My dad's a father.

My dad runs around.

My dad runs 4 miles a day.

My dad says women are only good for one thing.

My dad says Black women are living jewels.

My dad sent me money.

My dad sent for me.

My dad says school's for fools.

My dad says knowledge is power.

Like father, like son?

Scold him.

Mold him.

Love him.

Don't let him quit.

If he's third string,

go to his games, anyway.

If he can't hit a curve ball,

don't sweat him.

If he's not doing well in school,

give him hell.

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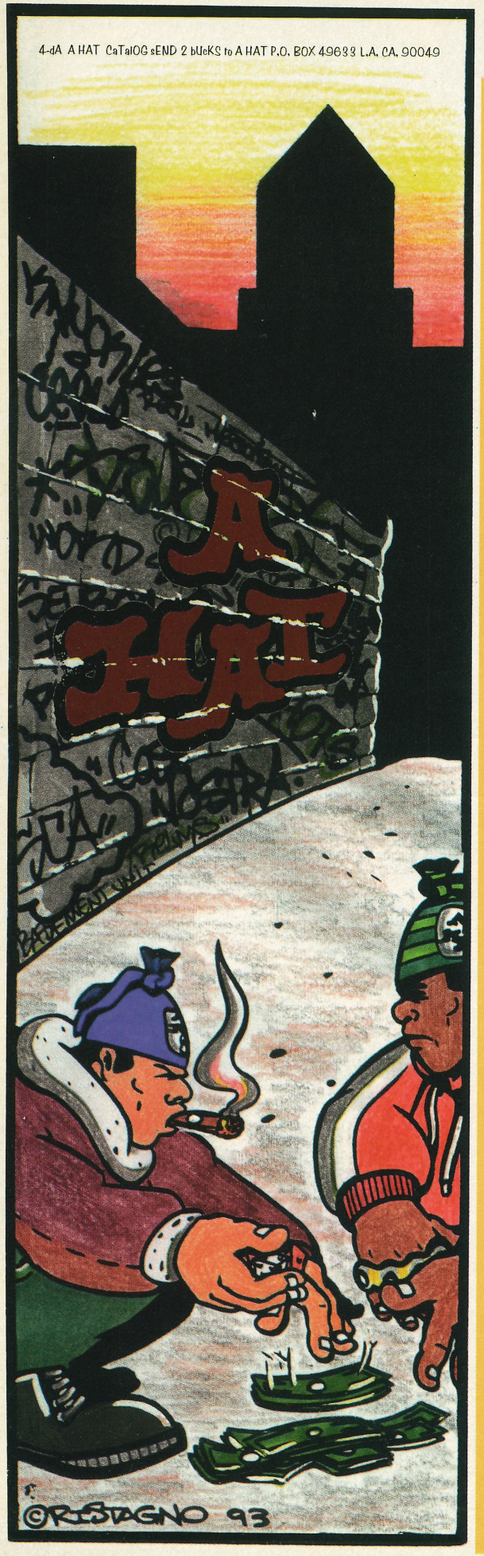
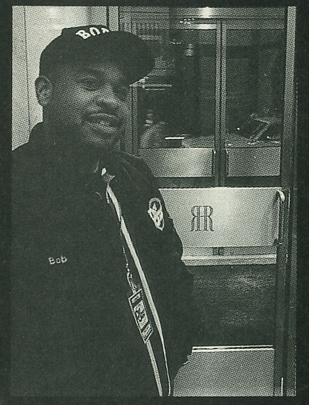


TELLING THE TRUTH

BOB SUMNER can brighten the mood at any comedy club in the country, but he's not a comedian. He's the man comedians want to know—the man who holds the power to deliver an aspiring young talent from the dark, smoky club circuit to the national stage of the "Russell Simmons Def Comedy Jam."

At 32, Sumner's rise to talent executive for the hit HBO show came after years of hard work in the Rush Communications structure. He hasn't let the responsibility go to his head, remaining chilled-out, easygoing and funny—attributes that only help him perform his unique job.



'DEF COMEDY JAM' TALENT SCOUT BOB SUMNER: EVERY COMIC'S BEST FRIEND

"Def Comedy Jam" is part cause and part effect of the current explosion of Black comedy into the mainstream, and Sumner is at ground zero. He took a break from the recent four-day marathon tapings in New York to offer his overview of the new comedy scene:

"For years, a lot of the major comics in the public eye were Black comics. You had Eddie Murphy, Richard Pryor, Redd Foxx, Bill Cosby—those were the people in the public eye. But there was never a vehicle to give more brothers a chance—comics who always tried to get their foot in the door—instead of there always being that *one*. Now with Russell Simmons able to get his television and film thing off the ground, he can create a vehicle via television to spotlight these young, Black comics who didn't get a chance to get into the mainstream clubs.

"I flew all around the country trying to find good young comics. I might go to a different city every other night with showcases. The place would be packed. I might see twelve muthafuckas and one's funny, but that one comes into the pile for the Def Comedy Jam. Then we bring Martin into the picture along with Kid Capri and the dancers and it all gels. Out of 150 total comedians we've put on, 115 of them haven't been repeated—and I bet there's another quadruple amount out there. We have a tour, the Def Comedy Jam Tour, that has sold out in 85% of the markets, and we played over 130 shows in over 95 cities. What's happening is, the brothers who were funny at the basketball court and shit, now we're giving them a chance to do that shit on stage.

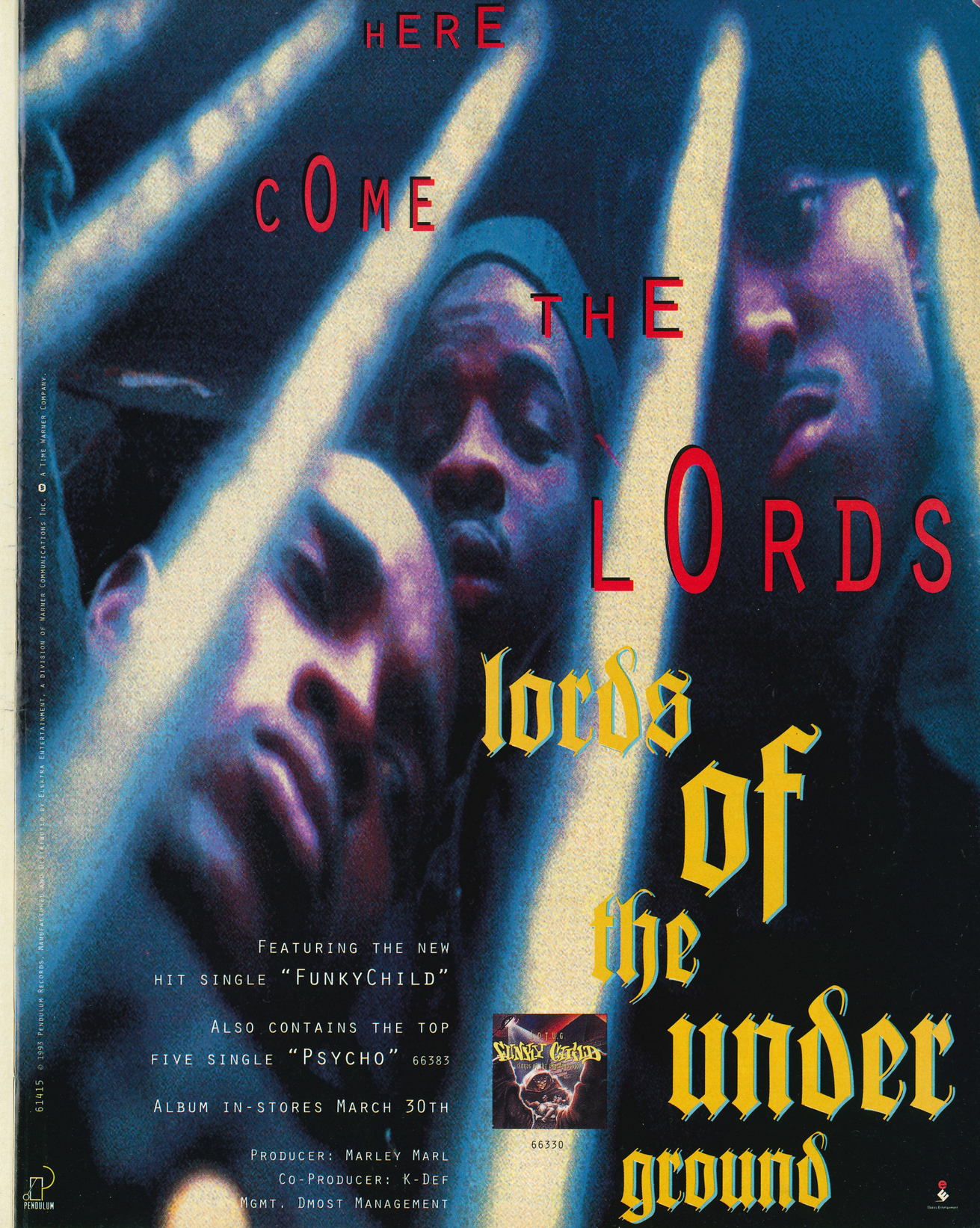
"See, the question for aspiring Black comics used to be, 'But do they have any credits?' Now they have credits. A lot of shit is happening off of the scene that we created nationally. But you had places like the Comedy Act Theater in LA that really need to be recognized. You have Uptown Comedy Club up in Harlem. I'm goin' up to the Bay Area Comedy Competition—that's the best Black comedy competition, they've been doing this for like seven years. And Showtime at the Apollo is part of it too.

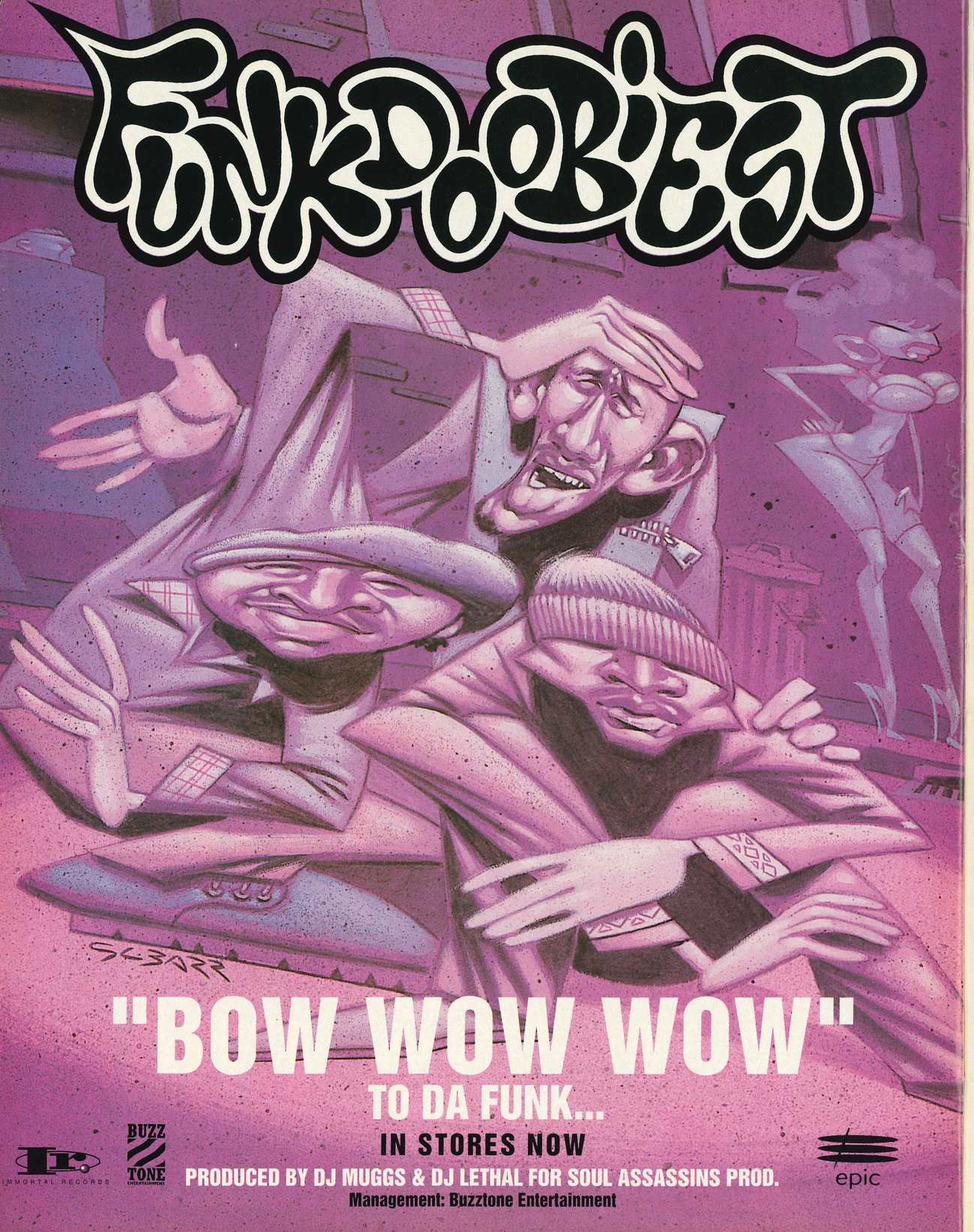
"A lot of people ask me the question, how long do I think this Black comedy phenomenon is gonna last. They asked the same shit about hip-hop, and look what's happening. Give 'em a chance boy, and muthafuckas be doin' it. The Def Comedy Jam is historical man, because it gives you an opportunity to tell the truth. There was a show called To Tell The Truth back in the '60s. The Def Comedy Jam is the real To Tell The Truth. I'm serious man, that's what it is."

THE SOURCE's special hip-hop comedy section begins on page 46.

JON SHECTER

CHI MODU





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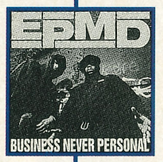

DIAMOND
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REDMAN
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Def Jam

HEAVY D & THE BOYZ
Blue Funk
Uptown/MCA

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ABOVE THE LAW
Black Mafia Life
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fat tape

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"PASS THE TECH" Tragedy	"OTHER FISH" The Pharcyde	"RAT BASTARD" Prime Minister Pete Nice & Daddy Rich	"WHERE I'M FROM" Digable Planets	"DUCK DA BOYZ" Strickly Roots
"A HOE B-4 THA HOMIE" King Tee	"WHO FREAKED WHO" Apache	"SIX TRAY" Freestyle Fellowship	HOT POTATO" Naughty By Nature	"I GET WRECKED" Tim Dog

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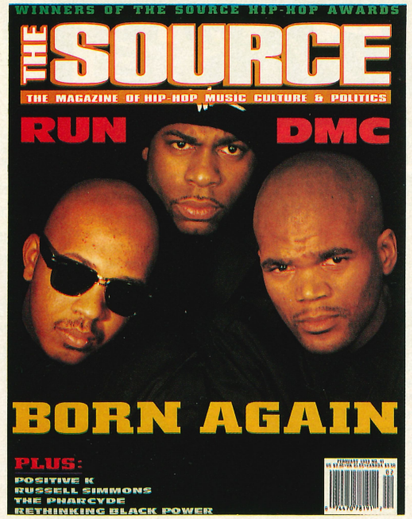

THE RETURN OF RUN-DMC

I must give mad props to Reginald Dennis for his well-written article on Run-DMC in the February '93 issue ["Born Again: The Rebuilding of Run-DMC"]. That was one of the best pieces I've ever read in any magazine anywhere including the *New York Times*, *Washington Post, Rolling Stone,* etc. The article really made me relive 1983 to 1987 when rap was just beats, scratches, and rhymes and not the smoothed out style it is today. It also made me want to find my "Sucker MCs" 12-inch and suede Pumas with the fat laces. Rap has come a long way since '83, evolving into a multi-billion dollar business, and sometimes leaving the music behind. However, Run-DMC has stuck to the beats, not fallen off or been swallowed up by the business side of rap like a lot of Old Schoolers. I wish them much success in the '90s and to the suckers out there who cannot come correct, I hope that Reginald "the gangsta with a pen in his clip" Dennis keeps comin' at 'cha.

Alisa M. Corbett
Virginia Beach, VA

I had a great time reading "Born Again: The Rebuilding of Run-DMC." I have a strong feeling their new album is going to blow up on the streets, where Run-DMC belongs. After a superb article like this on Run-DMC, how about one for their Old School competitors and friends, Whodini? They might not have had the success of Run, D and Jay, but Whodini's longevity cannot be questioned. By the way, did Joe, Darryl and Jason's *King Of Rock* go platinum first, or did John's, Jalil's and Drew's *Escape* capture that honor?

Mark D. Munson
Wausau, WI

Hey Reg, you came off like that seatbelt commercial on TV. You know, the one where "you can learn a lot from a dummy." You're trying to discourage Run-DMC from their new outlook by saying that "Christianity doesn't look too popular on the streets these days." Really? Wow, thanks for letting us know. You didn't finish. Tell us what is popular. You must be on the streets lately more than Run-DMC. What's the latest? Crime, gangs, 40 ounces, ruining your neighborhood with drugs? Christianity wouldn't work there—would it? OK, a lot of people are now coming out with Allah stances in their music even though Muslims have been around for a long time. That's their belief. Did you question Brand Nubian about their beliefs? Maybe Allah ain't that hot on the streets either. Warn them, it might be a bad career move! Hey Reg, next time you're driving around the streets looking for the newest shit, wear a seatbelt brother.

"God made me funky"
New York, NY

These brothers don't have nothing to prove to anyone in the hip-hop world, they made hip-hop mainstream. I wish them the best with their comeback, but they won't rule as they once did. Too many brothers have skills in the hip-hop world. These brothers must be enlightened to the proper knowledge of God. God is not a righteous and unseen being up in the sky watching every individual person on the planet at one time. Run said that a mystery God gave them the fame and they weren't doing what that mystery God wanted them to do, so that mystery God dropped the fame on them a little. That did not happen. What dropped the fame on them was Rakim, Big Daddy Kane, KRS-One, Kool G Rap, EPMD, PE and many others.

Be Allah Rich
Brooklyn, NY

THE NATIVE PEOPLE

'Nuff respect to The Source for the article focusing on Native Americans ["American Apartheid," by Lena Delgado De Torres, Feb. '93]. I myself am a Native American, a member of the Ogala Sioux Tribe and an avid hip-hop listener. I would like to thank you for the brief education and insight on the connection between my people and Africans back in the 18th and 19th centuries. For a long time I tried to research this particular subject in endless libraries, unfortunately to no avail. What is so surprising to me is the similar plight of oppression, racism, hardship and the whole shit that Native Americans and Africans went, and in fact, still go through 'till this very day. We sometimes don't recognize this because my people are considered "the invisible ones." Now with the help of great people like PE and Michael Haney my people may finally have a voice on this planet and rise as one.

Charles Killsright
Brooklyn, NY

SICK AND TIRED

I'm getting sick and tired of turning the pages of The Source to find over and again articles about who's beating up on who in the arena of gangsta rap bullshit. I didn't mind it so much at the beginning. It even used to amuse me. I thought it was just a phase in the ever-widening world of rap reporting, but now issues later it seems you want your readers to believe that that's the extent of what rap has to offer. You're constantly missing the boat on artists who are actually trying to make a difference. If it wasn't for a good friend, I would have never heard of the Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy, one of the hardest hitting political rap bands in years. You haven't mentioned The Goats, who speak to almost every issue that has ever frustrated the Hip-Hop Nation. The few you do cover, like PE, you gun down with lousy ratings (Three mics to their Greatest Misses album? Come on now, you oughta be ashamed). And now it makes me wonder whether The Source's only goal is to fill its readers in on the latest trashy gossip. Of course I'm interested in knowing about the censorship of Ice T's "Cop Killer," and sure enough The Source covered it, but it's old news now and you boys are still talking about the shit. I see you being guilty of censorship yourselves (I say censorship because I'm hoping it isn't ignorance).

Avid Source Reader
Los Angeles, CA

HOUSE OF CLAIMS

I am writing to correct some errors reported in your year end issue by Chris Wilder ["Hip-Hop Memories," Jan. '93]. He states that on a rap panel in Los Angeles, I claimed "Everlast and Def Jef brought freestyling to LA." I never said that and the transcripts and video tape available through the Ghetty Foundation prove this. Secondly, I never said to Wilder that "EPMD was a gimmick group. . . ruining hip-hop." I said that many people in the music business treat hip-hop as a gimmick and that this was ruining the music by pumping groups for singles. As for being in LA for one year, well Chris get off the zenophobia pipe. I am entering my fourth year in California, which is longer than Wilder or indeed any full-time reporter from your magazine has spent here.

Brian Cross
Los Angeles, CA

Regarding a hip-hop panel he attended in Santa Monica, California, Wilder mentioned a man named Brian Cross (a panel member). Cross was a bad choice for the panel as Wilder pointed out because the straight-up punk knew

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LETTERS CONT.

nothing about hip-hop. However, what I found most disturbing was Wilder's comments on "too many whiteboys" that are ruining hip-hop. The only people ruining hip-hop, Black or white, are the perpetrating fools who don't know what time it is. He also noted that all white rappers are gimmicks. Of course a lot of them are, how do you expect the label to survive, g? The educated reader of THE SOURCE should know which artists are true to the game without any of Wilder's racist influences.

I.V.
Ontario, Canada

Chris Wilder's comment that any white rap group is a gimmick was straight up racist. I guess that makes Black rock groups Living Colour and Body Count "gimmicks" too. Those are some pretty successful gimmicks. House of Pain deserves much props. Would Pete Rock, the best DJ in the biz, do one of his famous phat remixes for "whiteboys who don't know shit" about rap music? Yo man, I think you are just nervous that finally there might actually be some white artists on the scene that are starting to catch wreck.

Nathan Scott
Raleigh, NC

Chris Wilder responds: *Of course Black rock groups aren't gimmicks. In case you forgot, Black people invented rock & roll, so it's not hard to imagine a Black group coming out and housing shit. Black people started hip-hop and we're not trying to have y'all take that over too. If you think back to my Quest piece in November of '91, I quoted Q-Tip saying, "They're trying to destroy hip-hop the same way they destroyed rock & roll. And we don't want rock & roll no more 'cause you fucked it up." Just like some people think Elvis started rock & roll, some think Vanilla Ice started hip-hop, and Nathan, I'm sure you see the absurdity in that.*

The reason I say any white rap group is a gimmick is because, whether intentional or not, their skin color automatically opens them up to a significantly larger audience—an audience that usually doesn't appreciate artists like Diamond, Above The Law, or Bust Down. And what does Pete Rock's business ventures have to do with this dumb argument? He can make a track for anybody he wants. Apparently you weren't paying attention, because I didn't say anything to the effect of "all white boys don't know shit." We all know how long Everlast has been around and besides, I'm pretty sure he recognizes the importance and talent of a group like EPMD.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Senior Editor, James Bernard *is on temporary leave to work on a book project; his "**Doin' The Knowledge**" column will return next month.*

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MEDIA WATCH

BY PISTOL PETE

AMBASSADOR TO HIP-HOP

An impressive open letter from revolutionary rapper **Paris** to **President Clinton**, published in the *Washington Post* on January 3rd, probably gave Clinton a more concise summary of the interests and needs of the African-American community than any cabinet member or advisor could ever hope to compile.

Paris made sure the new President would take the letter seriously, scolding Clinton for his campaign directives against **Sister Souljah** and **Jesse Jackson**. "Your actions were, in my view, calculating and unprincipled, and they angered me—but not enough to make me believe that you could not redeem yourself."

Health care, education, and unemployment were the main issues Paris addressed. And most importantly, Paris, who holds a degree in economics from U.C. Davis, offered detailed solutions. On unemployment, he suggested a revival of job training programs for Black youth and tax incentives for lending institutions interested in minority-owned businesses. "If you could put back to work—perhaps through a revamped Works Progress Administration—the 8.8 million Americans who are unemployed, you would increase the GNP by 6.1 percent. And that doesn't even count the billions in savings on unemployment and welfare benefits."

NIGGA, PLEASE?

Rap's burgeoning effect on racial attitudes in America was examined on the front page of a recent Sunday *New York Times*. While this alone would be noteworthy, the story actually takes center stage for its specific content: an examination of the hip-hop culture's liberal and uncensored use of the word "nigger."

Writer **Michel Marriot** correctly noted that the word has perennially been an aspect of urban slang, "strictly, and still, off limits to whites. But as the word has found a voice in black music, dance, and film, the role of black culture in popular culture has driven it into the mainstream."

The obvious controversy stems from within the African-American community, where there is debate about the propriety of keeping the usage of "nigger" alive. Marriot's reporting indicated that while many older Blacks have strong sentiments against the word—particularly those who were witness to the civil rights movement—they have nowhere near the influence of today's rap-influenced expression on America's youth. "Blacks who say they should use the word more openly maintain that its casual use, especially in the company of whites, will shift the word's context and strip 'nigger' of its ability to hurt."

SHUT 'EM DOWN!

The marketing of malt liquor, which has a higher alcohol content than beer, to predominantly Black, inner-city areas was examined recently on the ABC News program "20/20." Reporter **John Stossel**'s piece was filled with footage and interviews of brothers standing on the corner guzzling from 40s, as well as coverage of organized community protest movements who work against malt liquor products. But it was the advertising, especially of brands such as **St. Ides**, **Olde English**, and **Schlitz Malt Liquor Bull**, that came under attack.

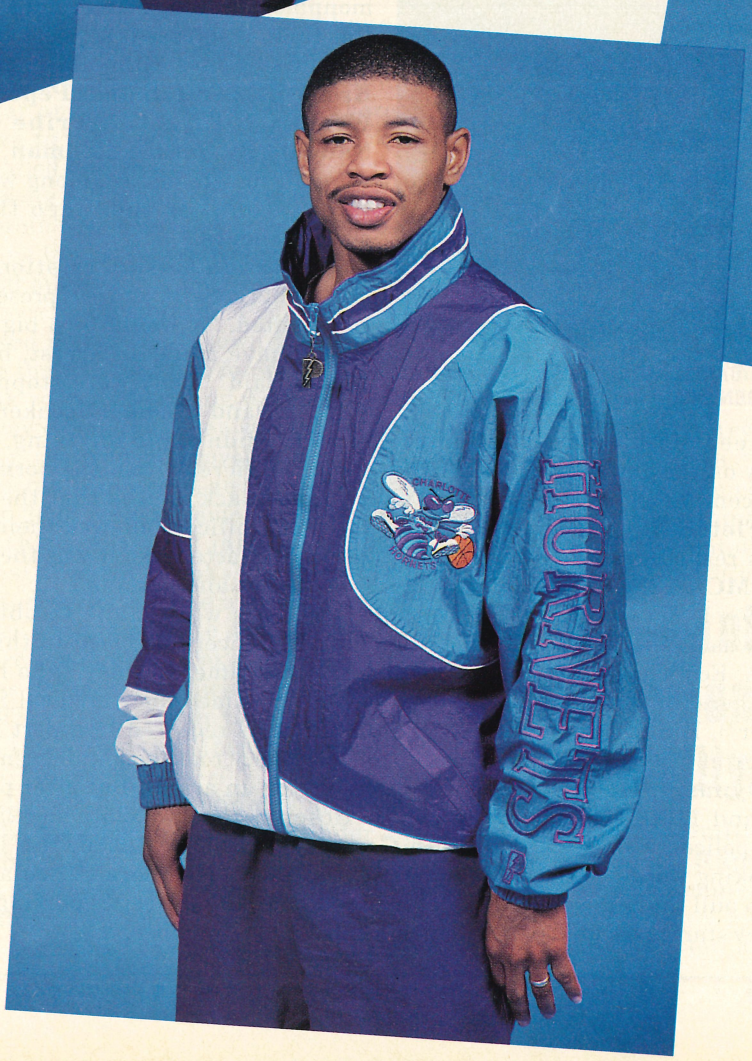
Over footage of a **Das EFX** concert, Stossel linked the strong influence of today's rap stars and music with company marketing plans to attract underage Black consumers. The controversial **Ice Cube** TV and radio spots ("Get your girl in the mood quicker/ Get your jimmy thicker/ With St. Ides Malt Liquor") were particularly criticized.

Public Enemy's **Chuck D** was interviewed, and he expressed concern with the strictly African-American focus of malt liquor marketing, offering advice for brothers caught up in the 40 movement: "If you're going to drink anything, drink what the white boys drink in their neighborhood. Don't drink something that's projected just for you." Of the malt liquor companies, he told Stossel, "If they're not selling in the white communities, don't sell [their product] in ours. We're going to have to shut 'em down."

VICTOR HALL

PRO LAYER

by daniel young



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COP HELL

Whodini and friends are harassed by police in Harlem who flee the scene when they realize they made a mistake

ECSTASY FROM WHODINI SHOWS THE BRUISE HE OBTAINED FROM THE BOOT OF AN UNIDENTIFIED COP

After one platinum and three gold albums, **Whodini** has remained mostly on the down low for the last few years. But recently, Whodini's lead rapper **Ecstasy (Jon X Fletcher)** decided to return to the hip-hop scene and pay his respects to long-time friends and hip-hop legends **Run-DMC** on the set of their new video "Down With The King."

It was a gospel/rap video that Run-DMC was filming. There were a lot of artists there to support them. Ecstasy arrived on the set in a black Pathfinder with four others: **Latief** (who produced **Grand Puba's** "Soul Controller"), **Black** (down with **Gang Starr**), **Spyderman** (producer of several **Bell Biv Devoe** hits) and Jon's twin brother **Dynasty**. The jeep turned onto 2nd Avenue between 112th and 113th streets in uptown Manhattan and was rushed by police.

"We didn't have the music playing, smoking weed—nothing!" said Black. "They didn't even tell us to pull the car over. They just surrounded us with guns! Then they started demanding that we get out at the same time, banging on the windows [breaking the glass] and on the hood."

Police call it a case of mistaken identity. The black Pathfinder, they say, matched the description of another car used in an East Harlem supermarket robbery moments earlier. During the 30-minute rousting, the individuals were never charged with a crime.

Ecstasy says he was kicked in the face by an unidentified cop, Spyder was beaten and suffered flesh wounds from broken glass to his right hand. Frank, Whodini's road manager, says he was punched in the face by an officer when he arrived and tried to find out what had happened. Shocking? Not really. Police brutality is commonplace for Black Americans nationwide, but this time, their case is supported by many prominent entertainers within the music industry. **Kris Kross**, **KRS-One**, **Salt 'N Pepa**, **Doug E. Fresh**, **Wreckx-N-Effect**, **A Tribe Called Quest**, **Naughty By Nature**, **Redman**, and **Gang Starr** were all in attendance, along with the five men in question, for the video that shot for 18 straight hours.

C. Vernon Mason, an attorney and veteran civil rights activist who is representing the artists, commented. "It would be a big story if 20 cops would have made an arrest, but they didn't!" Mason said. "They were stopped, the car was searched and trashed. Speakers were torn out, and after the police didn't find anything, they left! What makes this slightly different from the normal everyday situations with young Black men is that they're well known musicians. The police officers allowed their emotions to get the best of them. They acted like it was the wild west. They all wanted to be heroes and heroins."

Although attempts were made to obtain names and badge numbers, the officers involved in this case remained unidentified at press time. Ecstasy, who happens to work for a hospital's EMS (Emergency Medical Service) division, knew that an officer is required to report his or her badge number to an emergency room hospital attendant when someone is injured during an arrest. But after phone calls to the Metropolitan Hospital, the 23rd, 25th and 28th precincts, the Civilian Complaint Review Board, the Internal Affairs Department, the Commissioners Office and City Hall, it was determined that the officer reporting to the hospital had given a false badge number.

BONZ MALONE

EDITED BY MATTY C

California's finest are at it again—this time the victim is DJ Pooh

Friday morning January 22, just before lunchtime. **DJ Pooh**, the 26-year-old who hooked up **LL Cool J** with beats for *Bigger And Deffer*, produced all the St. Ides commercials, and who worked on **Ice Cube's** *Death Certificate* and *The Predator*—president of **Da' Bomb Records**— was driving in his customized '92 **Chevy Suburban** truck with his homie and business partner **Rick Freeman**. The truck was cruising down the 405 Freeway at 55 m.p.h. when Pooh and Rick noticed that for 15 miles they had been trailed by a squad car from the Santa Monica police.

Asked to pull over, they did so, not knowing what was up as 15 to 20 more police cars surrounded Pooh's truck—Santa Monica police, LAPD, highway patrol and a helicopter overhead. The streets were blocked by cars, and Pooh and Rick were ordered to "Put your hands up, don't move and get out of the car!"

Fearing for his life, Pooh did as told, keeping his hands up and locked behind his head as he walked backwards towards the cops. "When I got there, I was slammed to the ground, down to my knees. He put his knee in my back and called me 'Nigger asshole, lay down or I'll blow your head off." The ligaments in his Pooh's knees were torn. He was handcuffed and searched, and his hands were yanked upward in a painful position while Pooh's upper body was searched.

"When he recognized that I didn't have a gun, he pushed me down, flat down on my face so he could search the back area. And when they didn't find nothing, they got Rick out the car and pulled him over to where I was and threw him down to the ground. A cop told Rick, 'Lay down stupid.' They called him all kind of names and told him that they were looking for a bag of money and a gun. I told them they wouldn't find none so they went to search the truck and left us laying face down on the pavement there for like 25 to 30 minutes."

When the search proved futile, Pooh once again had his handcuffs jerked as he was thrown into a Santa Monica police car while they checked him for warrants. "I guess they went from bank robbery to seeing if I had any traffic warrants so one way or another they wanted to do something with me." When the police discovered that Pooh and Rick Freeman were actually innocent, an **Officer Graham** (Santa Monica badge # 2802), tried to smooth things out, attempting to justify this travesty of justice with the ol' your-truck-looks-just-like-the-crooks'. "But my Suburban is custom-made and sticks out like a sore thumb," Pooh said. "I have yet to see another one like it on the streets." It turns out the cops were saying "the crooks got away in a Suburban" when there was actually no official description of the getaway vehicle. "They had no reason to stop us, they just fucked with us," Pooh says. "And then they tried to say, 'You guys are clean to go.'"

The ordeal lasted 30 to 45 minutes and left a bit of a scar on Pooh, who has attorneys **Charles Linder** and **Johnny Cochran** on the case. "I didn't know that being Black in public and having things was a crime," Pooh bitterly concludes. "I'm filing suit to make sure those responsible for this are held accountable." Ironically enough, Pooh is respon-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

Scarface's friend and bodyguard is shot and killed by a police officer in Shreveport, Louisiana

After a performance in January, **Scarface** of the **Geto Boys** went into a Shreveport, Louisiana waffle house accompanied by his friend and bodyguard, **Rudy Sanders**. Instead of food, he got beef from local gang members throwing hand signals.

"Some niggas got out of line with that gang shit knowing I ain't from LA," Scarface explained. "We ain't down with that ol' squabbin' shit, we tryin' to make some peace, right? We tryin' to make everybody come together and just be like one, but naw, they ain't want it like that." A bit of a scuffle ensued, and at that point, the gang members allegedly pulled guns. Scarface was shot once through the thigh.

Scarface continued: "We came back in 'cause I had got shot. I'm waiting for somebody to come over to tell me if I'm cool or not. I had gotten shot. And the shooting outside started again. So my partner went out again and started bustin'. And a lot of [cops] out there, who were supposed to be keeping the peace outside with them kids doin' the shooting, were shooting in at my partner, like we was down with the niggas and shit! And then the law shot *him* in the back four times. Four times in the back! Killed him! [Cops] Just left him laying there, no help, no nothing. 911 is a joke. They let my partner die, they let him bleed to death. Then they tried to cover up the story. There's something about rappers and police that just don't mix, that's fucked up."

The Shreveport Police Department has a different story. They say that an off-duty Officer Grant working security in the restaurant demanded that Sanders put down his weapon before he started firing shots at the alleged gang members outside. When Sanders proceeded to fire, police say Grant was "forced to fire his service weapon, striking the man in the left arm and shoulder." Police say both Scarface and the deceased were taken to the LSU Medical Center. Rudy's death has been labelled a "justifiable homicide" in Louisiana.

"They're trying to cover up because they fucked up," says Scarface. "Saying the cop 'was forced' to shoot Rudy is bullshit. The cop wasn't in any danger, and he shot that boy from behind. They shot him in the back, four times."

Coincidentally enough, the new Geto Boys release is a single entitled "Crooked Officer."

RONIN RO

Rap-A-Lot Records organizes a demonstration against police brutality and harassment

James Smith—president of Scarface's label, the Houston-based **Rap-A-Lot Records**—claims that the **Drug Enforcement Agency** influenced a police officer to frame him recently by planting drugs on him. Smith was driving when pulled over by an **Officer B.J. Raymond**, who

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

GRAMMY GLUT

How to let real hip-hop represent at The Grammys

In 1988, the **National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences, Inc.** (NARAS) added the rap music category into the annual **Grammy Awards**. Each year since then, the nominations are made and a Grammy is awarded to the "best" Rap Solo Performance and to the "best" Rap Performance by a Duo or Group. So who gets to nominate, and who gets to vote?

Check it: In May, NARAS sends out entry forms to record labels, its 6500 voting members, and 2500 non-voting members. Entries—sometimes totaling near 10,000—are then screened for eligibility and appropriate category placement. The eligibility period for releases is October 1 through September 30 of the awards year.

In November, NARAS sends out an official list of all eligible entries, along with a ballot, to all NARAS voting members. The votes from this first ballot will determine the five nominees in each category. In January, the voting members receive the final ballot listing all nominees. The results of this vote are tabulated by **Deloitte & Touche** (one of the biggest accounting firms in the country) to determine the Grammy winners. Then in the last week of February, I get to sit in my living room and throw things at my television, furious as I look at the sorry choices for Grammy Award winners in the rap categories.

It appears that the rap music industry is totally underrepresented in NARAS. Any artist or technical professional who has six recorded and commercially released selections can join NARAS and vote for the Grammy Awards. You must shell out $65 per year (plus a one time initiation fee of $20) and you must qualify within one or more of the following categories: vocalists, singers, producers, engineers, songwriters, composers, instrumentalists, musicians, art directors, photographers, album notes writers, orators/poets, or music video directors and producers.

Isn't it about time that the Grammy Awards for rappers were based on the tastes of their voting peers? The hip-hop community needs to be heard, and we need to exercise more voting power in the NARAS. For more information or for an application, please write to **Rap Coalition** at P.O. Box 3899, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163. WENDY DAY

ILLUSTRATION BY TODD JAMES

RAP GRAMMY AWARD WINNERS

1989
DJ Jazzy Jeff & the Fresh Prince
"Parents Just Don't Understand"

1990
Young MC
"Bust A Move"

1991 (expanded to two rap categories)
Solo: Hammer
"Can't Touch This"
Duo/Group: Quincy Jones
"Back on the Block" Various Artists

1992
Solo: LL Cool J
"Mama Said Knock You Out"
Duo/Group: DJ Jazzy Jeff & The Fresh Prince
"Summertime"

DJ POOH CONT. FROM PAGE 19

sible for "Get The Fist," a record meant to help Los Angeles heal from the uprisings, and his brother is employed by the Police Department. RONIN RO

RAP-A-LOT CONT. FROM PAGE 19

Smith described as "trigger happy." Raymond had arrested Smith before but had his case against Smith thrown out of court due to Raymond's improper procedure. Smith claims that Raymond searched his car and tried to engage Smith in conversation about how Smith got the previous case dismissed. Smith claims he did not want to talk about it and was placed in the back of a squad car for two hours while Raymond called a **DEA** agent to the scene. Raymond charges that drugs were planted and he was arrested, taken into custody—without being informed that he was being taken in for drug possession—and released days later.

Smith, who says this is not the first time this has happened, then called for a protest/demonstration/press conference in front of the Houston police headquarters on the **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's** birthday. The purpose of the demonstration was said to be to draw attention to the issue of police brutality.

RONIN RO

ANT BANKS

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EAR TO THE STREET

PORTRAIT

Painting a positive image

If a picture is worth a thousand words then R&B group **Portrait** is definitely on the right track. "The name Portrait is the epitome of the young Black male," says member **Eric Kirkland**. "With all of our different experiences we're trying to give a positive image of Black men."

Members **Phillip Johnson**, Eric Kirkland, **Irving Washington III**, and **Michael Angelo Saulsberry** write and sing songs that reflect their vast array of musical and life experiences. Combining '70s R&B with a '90s hip-hop sound, they achieve a winning mix with the album's first single, "Here We Go Again." "This song has a funky beat, it's a little fun, a little sarcastic—but it has something everyone can relate to," says Eric. The rest of the album covers the musical gamut with ballads like "Day by Day," the tender, haunting interlude "Why" and the rap-laced "Honey Dip."

To make the best of their diverse talent, the foursome moved into a house together. "We respect each other's talent and we complement each other musically," says Irving. Making music that reflects everyday life experiences is a collective effort for Portrait. But each member has a different song that's their personal favorite. For Michael, it's "Day by Day," Irving likes "Precious Moments," Eric prefers "Why" and Phillip is into "Honey Dip." But from the sound of their self-titled album, choosing a favorite song is sure to be difficult. With musical influences that range from **Stevie Wonder**, **Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis**, and **Charlie Lewis** of **The Gap Band**, Portrait has developed their own style of R&B/funk.

So what does the future hold for Portrait? "We don't want to dilute the airwaves, we just want to share our sound," says Eric. "We're willing to try new things, we're open for it all."

SHERIE HOLDER

HORN OF PLENTY

Remembering Dizzy (1917-1993)

DIZZY GILLESPIE is a name that brings to mind an impeccably dressed "cool cat" from the be-bop era of jazz. Moreover, it conjures up an image of an older regal man, cheeks bloated, playing a bent horn over an Afro-Cuban groove. Three reknowned trumpeters reflect on the contributions of Dizzy:

"While in the presence of his warm personality, music always dominated the conversation."
—Terence Blanchard

"Bach and Beethoven left a treasure; so has he."
—Marlon Jordan

"With his passing, a source of encouragement and love for many musicians and for music is extinguished."
—Wynton Marsalis

TY WILLIAMS

BOOK REVIEW

Malcolm X, In Our Own Image

edited by Joe Wood

Exploring the orderly passage of revolution from one generation to another

Like many young brothers and sisters, I am not satisfied with wearing X-caps and t-shirts. We are opposed to popular and superficial opinions, hungry for knowledge and progression. And this is why books on **Malcolm X** must be carefully scrutinized. There are so many of us seeking direction and clarity within a society that provides little of either.

Unfortunately, Woods' collection of disparate voices speaking about Malcolm provides little understanding of this man-now-icon. With a few notable exceptions, the majority of the essays here are thickly imbued with the particular writer's own political vision, which more often than not seems to have nothing to do with Malcolm X.

Angela Davis (activist and feminist), for example, explores the possibility of Malcolm X's involvement in the 'worldwide' feminist movement if he were alive today. She examines this within the context of her own views and work, reading new meaning into Malcolm's speeches. And those new meanings are at best a stretch of one's political imagination.

Cornel West (director, Afro-American Studies, **Princeton University**) poses some challenging questions to Malcolm's ideology and articulately draws him beyond the usual one-dimensional "prophet of rage" figure. He goes on later to claim that Malcolm, unlike **Rev. King** (and **Elijah Muhammad!**) did not understand the destructive character of Black rage that exists minus a political and moral structure. That assertion leaves itself open to serious question because it appears to ignore the fact that, as a public figure, Malcolm was continuously involved in political and spiritual organizations (**The Nation of Islam** to the **OAAU** and **Muslim Mosque Inc.**).

The two best pieces, in my opinion, are by **Amiri Baraka** and **Patricia Williams**. Neither one of these writers is so self-absorbed that they cannot present a lucid analysis based on what actually happened then and what is actually happening now. Baraka, a noted poet and dramatist, says "part of our cultural revolution must be to protect the reality of Malcolm's life, because that is the only way we will protect the reality of our own."

One of the luxuries of being a writer is the ability to instantly transform yourself into an authority on any subject, but calling yourself an authority doesn't make you one. *Malcolm X, In Our Own Image* is not much more than a grouping of intellectual masturbation pieces that leave the reader no closer to truth. What's the bottom line? Take your money, read the autobiography, read the speeches and chart your own path for change.

ASHA BANDELE

HEAVY D & THE BOYZ

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EAR TO THE STREET

SOUL POWER

The formative years of hip-hop music and culture: 1968 to 1974

From 1968 to 1974, the creativity of many unsung heroes helped shape the music, dance, graffiti and style that was to become hip-hop culture. Mixing on two turntables, bombing graffiti and early uprocking all started during this period. Also, countless records from this era have been sampled to provide the tracks for hundreds of hits in hip-hop.

Before anyone knew what to call it—before boom boxes, before Nike and Adidas, back when kids were writing graffiti with liquid shoe polish, and way before the **Sugar Hill Gang's** "Rapper's Delight"—the hip-hop attitude was already in its early stages in many neighborhoods in New York City.

1968 was a milestone year in the formation of hip-hop culture. The Vietnam War was in full swing, **Martin Luther King's** assassination in April sparked riots nationwide, **Tommie Smith** and **John Carlos** shocked the world at the 1968 Summer Olympics by raising the "Black Power" salute during the National Anthem. Black consciousness, Black is beautiful, Black Liberation Day, Black love zodiac posters, Black lights, Black Nationalism, Black movies, Miss Black America pageants, and red, black and green sweatsocks were all a part of this new Black pride. Afros, braids, cornrows, sharkskin pants, Monkey boots, high-top black Pro-Keds with the three stripes on the side, beaver hats and Army fatigues all became essential aspects of style.

New York was alive with new music, dance, graffiti and block parties. Soul Brother Number One, **James Brown**, was at the height of his career, putting out hit after hit. He influenced the entire soul movement when he changed the influence of the music to syncopated drums, basslines and guitar riffs with songs like "Cold Sweat" and "Mother Popcorn."

Numerous independent record labels like **Stang**, **Brunswick**, **Delite**, **Buddha**, **Stax**, and **Chess** released a steady stream of 45s, keeping the music constantly in flux. Soul music gradually evolved into the funk music of the early '70s. **Sly & The Family Stone**, **The Isley Brothers**, **New Birth**, **The Ohio Players**, **Mandrill**, **The Jimmy Castor Bunch**, **Bohannon**, **Funkadelic**, **Kool & the Gang**, **Barry White**, **WAR**, **The Fatback Band**, **Curtis Mayfield**, **Marvin Gaye**, **Stevie Wonder**, and **Aretha Franklin** were all up and down the charts.

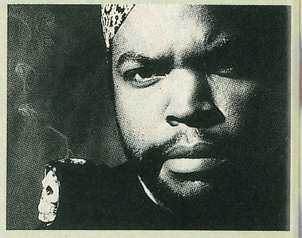
Mobile DJ trailblazers such as **Flowers**, **Pete DJ Jones**, **Maboya**, **Plummer**, **The Smith Brothers**, **DJ Kool Herc** and others who never became famous, ignited the flame that was soon to inspire a new generation of hip-hop DJs. Back then, the DJs were the center of attention, and each DJ had his own following. According to the legendary Pete DJ Jones, around 1972 to '73, Flowers was the first DJ to be called "Grandmaster."

So the stage was set. The music, dance, graffiti and style were all evolving side by side. Each aspect is part of a continuous growth that reflects a culture of self-expression. With all the major record deals, platinum albums, worldwide tours, commercials, and movies that have come out of hip-hop, everyone who enjoys the music should recognize and appreciate the soul of the early creators.

BRIAN LASSITER

HIP-HOP "QUOTABLE"

the dopest rhyme of the month



ICE CUBE
from "It Was A Good Day" off *The Predator*

"Just waking up in the morning gotta thank God
I don't know but today seems kinda odd
No barking from the dog, no smog
And mama cooked a breakfast with no hog
I got my grub on but didn't pig out
Finally got a call from a girl I wanna dig out
Hooked it up for later as I hit the do'
Thinkin' will I wait another 24?
I got to go 'cause I got me a drop top
And if I hit the switch, I can make the ass drop
Had to stop at a red light
Looking in my mirror, not a jacker in sight
And everything is alright
I got a beep from Kim and she could f--k all night
Called up the homies and I'm askin' y'all
Which park are y'all playing basketball
Get me on the court and I'm trouble
Last week f--ked around and got a triple-double
Freaking niggas everyway like MJ
I can't believe today was a good day. . .
Drove to the pad and hit the showers
Didn't mean to get no static from the cowards
'Cause just yesterday them fools tried to blast me
Saw the police and they rolled right past me
No flexin'
didn't even look in a nigga's direction as I ran the intersection
Went to Short Dog's house, they was watching Yo! MTV Raps
What's the haps on the craps?
Shake 'em up, shake 'em up, shake 'em up, shake 'em
Roll 'em in a circle lettin' niggas watch me break em
With the seven, seven eleven, seven eleven, seven even back do' Lil' Joe
I picked up the cash flow
Then we played bones and I'm yellin' dominos
Plus nobody I know got killed in South Central, LA
Today was a good day. . ."

JERO, TAMER & PORNO ROCK "AFRICA" IN NJ

THE SOURCE will continue to cover graffiti/aerosol art—a permanent aspect of hip-hop culture—so stay tuned and send flicks to:

THE SOURCE—GRAF FLIX
594 Broadway, Suite 510
New York, NY 10012

MILK IS CHILLIN' IN GERMANY

DZINE FROM CHICAGO GETS NICE AT THE BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND "PRESSURE PAINT FESTIVAL"

MODE DOWN WITH HEADHUNTERS, BRINGS MAD CHARACTER SKILLS TO PARIS, FRANCE

SLICK & RISKY FOR THE ICE CUBE VIDEO "WHO'S THE MACK" AT MOTOR TRACKS IN LA

ARTIFACTS

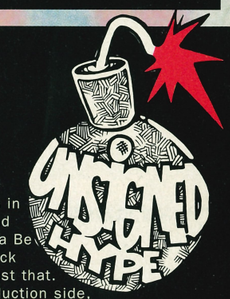
Straight from the brick city of New Jerusalem (Newark, NJ) is a young duo named **Artifacts** that is more than ready to drop bombs. MCs **Tame** and **El The Sensai** are already well connected in the rap game. Does the **Pack Pistol Posse** ring a bell? Yeah, that's right; they "rock ruff rhymes" around the way with Tame's cousin **Redman**. You might even catch a similarity in their rhymes. But with Redman hard at work producing and then promoting his first album, Artifacts is not trying to wait for him to get put on.

Tame and El started staking their claim in the underground last year when they first called up the **Stretch Armstrong** college radio show in New York and won an over-the-phone rap contest. Since then Stretch, **Daddy Reef** and **Bobbito** have had them up a few times to wreck shop on the airwaves.

Artifacts incorporates classic B-boy flavor into their lyrics. Train yards, third rails, mad color tips, black books, and backspins are common topics. As evidenced by the flick, much homage is paid to the izms. Representing **The Boom Squad**, their crew rolls mad thick.

A couple other heads looking out for the Artifacts are **Sadat X** and **Lord Jamar** of **Brand Nubian**. Jamar produced a song called "Wrong Side Of The Tracks," featuring Lord J vocals on the chorus, and both Brand Nubian brothers collaborated with the Artifacts on "Check The Fine Print," a bangin' upbeat track with a lyrical buckshot to so-called righteous MCs with "white hoes in their videos" and a verbal assault on the ex-Brand Nubian member. **T-Ray** (who produced "Not Gonna Be Able To Do It" by the **Double XX Posse**) did a track called "Wicked Lyrics" where Tame and El kick just that. Although they had some serious help on the production side, they show and prove skills of their own with some pre-production material. Overall, Artifacts represents real hip-hop on its way up from the underground.

MATTY C



Each month in this column, we profile a talented group or artist that has yet to sign a label deal. Send top quality demo tapes with a description of the contents, a black and white photo, and contact information to:

THE SOURCE—Unsigned Hype
594 Broadway, Suite 510
New York, NY 10012

Please limit tapes to your best three cuts.

SAVAGE RAP

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THE SINGLE "GIRLS N GUNS"
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bits and pieces

•**In a shocking** development in the rap censorship wars, **Ice-T** was granted an unconditional release from his **Sire/Warner Bros.** recording contract due to "creative differences." On January 28, Warner announced that Ice-T's new album *Home Invasion* will not be coming out on Sire as originally scheduled and that the master tapes had been returned to the artist. The release also applies to Ice-T's heavy metal group **Body Count**. As you might have expected, Ice didn't have much trouble finding a label that would put his album out. **Priority Records** has agreed to release *Home Invasion*, and it should be out before the summer. . . •A couple of lyrical and visual battles between rappers continue to brew on the video screen. A **DJ Quik** look-a-like receives multiple beat downs in **Compton's Most Wanted's** new video "Def Wish II," and an unidentified "runner on third bass" has his head flown like a baseball in **Pete Nice's** new video "Dirty Rat Bastard." Walking around a big table like **Al Capone** in *Untouchables*, Pete Nice stops behind the only white guy at the table and says, "the runner on third bass, what does he say? I'm going out there for myself, but I get nowhere without the team. Without the team I'm nothing." Staying consistent with the re-enactment of the movie, Pete proceeds to use the back of the kid's head for batting practice. As the blood pours over the table, the song begins. Wonder how Serch will respond? . . •And while two of hip-hop's most credible white rappers battle it out on the video screen, **Marky Mark** hits the cover of **Penthouse** magazine and shares its pages with Penthouse Pet of the Month, **Natalie Smith**. . . •Speaking of white rappers with questionable skills, **Kid Rock's** "Yodeling In The Valley" had the **FCC** outraged when it was played on the **State University of New York at Cortland's** radio station. The school was charged $23,750, the largest fine in the history of college radio, for the obscene nature of the song. Well Kid, at least you got some attention. . . •It's getting easier for the establishment to the crack the whip on hardcore and explicit rap, even in prison. At the **Waupun Correctional Institution** in Wisconsin, all cassette tapes are reviewed before allowing inmates to listen to any rap music. The prison has issued a list of tapes which are allowed and not allowed. **Public Enemy**, **Naughty By Nature**, **2 Live Crew** and **Compton's Most Wanted** are allowed, but **Ice Cube**, **NWA**, **Scarface**, and **Too Short** are not. Yeah, good luck to the correction officer trying to enforce that one.

TOP: DJ QUIK GETS A BEATDOWN IN A COMPTON'S MOST WANTED VIDEO BOTTOM: A SERCH LOOK-A-LIKE GETS HIS HEAD FLOWN BY PETE NICE DOING AL CAPONE

CARLOS FELIZ

ICE T's ALBUM WILL COME OUT ON PRIORITY RECORDS

the new *smooth*

silk

lose control

the debut album featuring
"Freak Me"
"Happy Days" and
"Girl U For Me"

executive producer:
KEITH SWEAT

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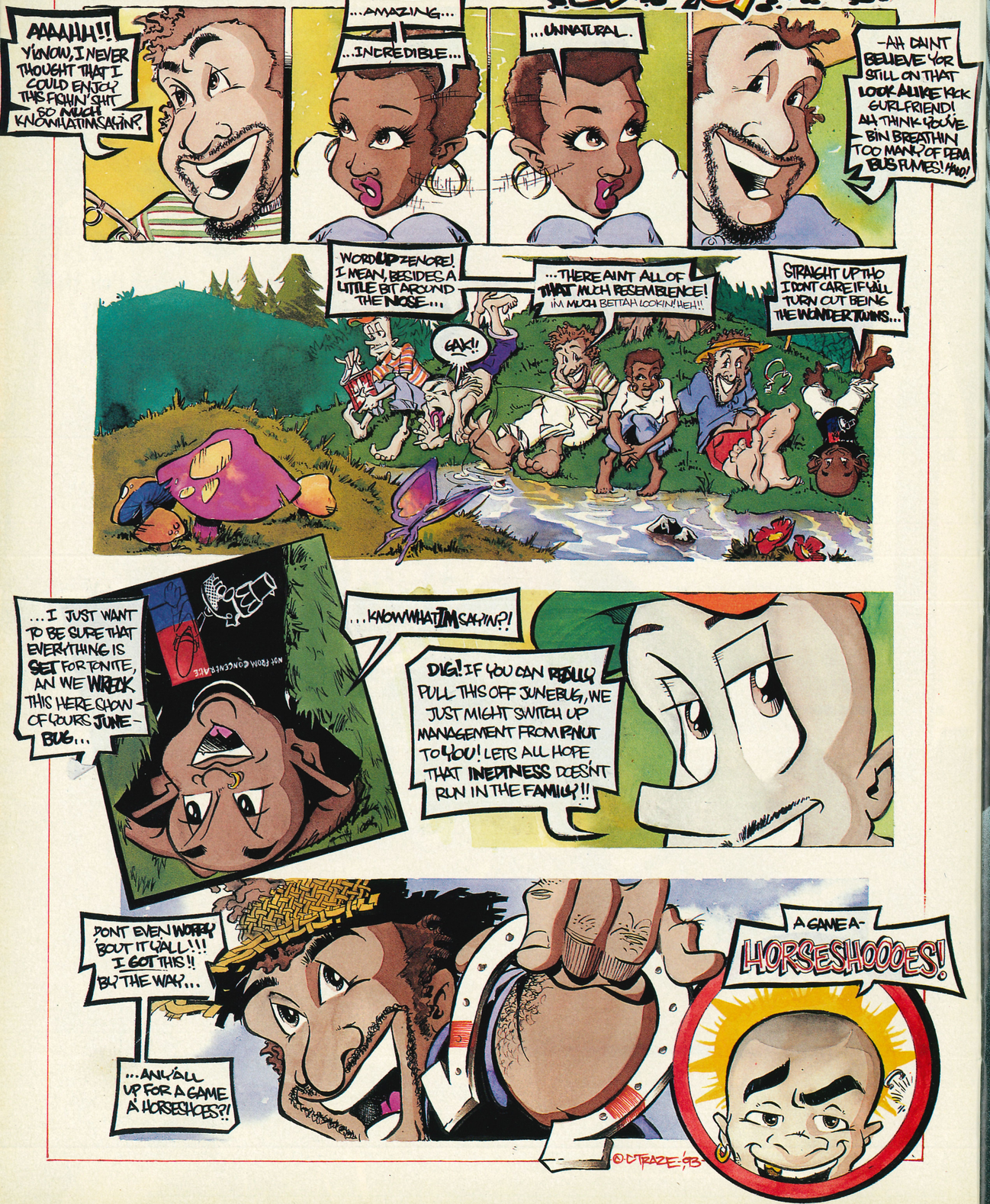
KEIA RECORDS

THE SOURCE
THE MAGAZINE OF HIP HOP MUSIC, CULTURE & POLITICS
Presents...
A VIEW FROM... HOOD GROUND



NEW FROM
YOUNG BLACK TEENAGERS
YBT
DEAD ENZ
KIDZ DOIN LIFETIME BIDZ
THE ALBUM
FEATURING
TAP THE BOTTLE
PRODUCED BY TERMINATOR X
ON S.O.U.L. CDs, TAPES AND WAX
©1992 MCA RECORDS
ALBUM PRODUCED BY KEITH SHOCKLEE AND GARY G-WIZ EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: HANK SHOCKLEE

CHRIS ROCK, DEEZER D AND ALLEN PAYNE ON STAGE AS A FICTIONAL RAP GROUP IN "CB4."

Cell Block 4

BY JUDI McCREARY

Two blocks east of Adams and La Brea in Los Angeles, the motion picture capital of the world, the street is teeming with people. Sixteen wheelers flank the curbs and the motorcycle cops dart nervous glances at the crowd. The neighborhood residents are amused at the cops discomfort as they lean against brick storefronts and an occasional boarded up window, a stark reminder of the riots in May of 1992. This is the set of *Cell Block 4*, the humorous rapumentary that has just hit the theaters and is expected to blow up big this Spring.

The cast and crew are further down the block, seated at trestle tables in front of catering trucks on an empty lot. Everyone eats their lunch with speed. Dinner is scheduled for midnight and there's a lot to do in between.

Laughter erupts from the table in the back. And there he is—Chris Rock is holding court—the star of this comedy for Universal.

Chris Rock, 26 years old, Saturday Night Live alumnus, stand-up comedian and player of bit parts and supporting roles, was at one point in his career hailed as the next Eddie Murphy. The comparisons have long since ended, but he gives a wary look as I sit across from him. By no means a media darling, he's slightly uncomfortable as acclaimed music critic Nelson George (*Strictly Business*) the co-writer and co-producer of *Cell Block* hovers protectively by.

They start out by telling me the premise, which details the rise and fall of a hardcore rap group, Cell Block 4, whose roots are middle class at best. Chris' character, Albert Brown, assumes the identity of a big-time hood named Gusto through circumstance and seizes the opportunity to front a notorious gangsta rap group. Their fall from the top is instigated by none other than a SOURCE columnist named Eve Edwards, played by Theresa Randle (*Malcolm X*), who refuses to buy into their ghetto bravado.

Cell Block 4 was born in Nelson's Fort Greene, Brooklyn apartment, two friends kickin' ill jokes back and forth, dissin' the eight million shitty movies that were out at the time. They thought they could do better, so they blasted Cube's *Amerikkka's Most* and banged out the first draft.

The action plays in fictional Lo Cash, California and some of the jokes will remind you of *Airplane!*. Crazy humor, but there's a real story in there, pointing the finger at the phony gangsta wannabes in hip-hop today, totin' pistols for the camera in burnt out neighborhoods they know nothing about.

Chris Rock is co-producing this picture, which is a lot of pressure considering this is his first starring role. He shrugs me off and assures me he's the producer of jokes. Nelson adds that Chris also attracted the talent—Charlie Murphy, Allen Payne, Phil Hartman and Chris Elliot. You would think that the next logical step for these two would be a three-picture deal at one of the major studios in town. Not so. Chris is practically itching to go on tour, back to the comedy clubs where he started, and Nelson is looking forward to his book tour later in '93.

The scene they are shooting is outside of what's supposed to be a popular club. I look at one of the monitors as Tamra Davis, the director—primarily known for music videos—gives Phil Hartman some instruction. He plays an anal politician called Robinson (a male Tipper Gore) who is offended by Cell Block 4 and their music. His "straight man" performance usually cracks people up, but no one even smiles. I notice the production state and after five takes I realize there's nothing funny to the crew anymore. It's grueling repetition that goes long into the early morning.

It's late morning, but I squint from the glare of the huge HKs, powerful lights that can allow you to shoot a daytime scene at night. Charlie Murphy sits beside me in a director's chair puffing angrily on a cigarette, eyes hidden behind glitter prop glasses, away from the ever present comments that he looks like his famous brother.

Although Charlie has been writing scripts for several years, as well as producing music, success has eluded him thus far. Add that to the common assumption that Eddie Murphy supports him and this Black man will spit nails. He pays his own way, and he's hoping that this supporting role as Gusto will lead to serious studio attention. Paramount has already agreed to do a script he wrote about vampires in Brooklyn with him starring and Eddie performing bit characters, like in *Coming to America*.

Allen Payne is being marketed as the sex symbol of the movie. He plays Euripidies Smalls aka Dead Mic, a socio-politically aware afrocentric brother who falls for Eve. After his performance in *New Jack City*, Allen all but disappeared from the film scene, opting instead for a small, recurring role on "The Cosby Show." And that's where his interest remains. He believes that there are less headaches and more opportunities in television series work. He says an actor can be blown up so large.

Newcomer Deezer D plays Otis O. Otis aka Stabmaster Arson, the deejay of the group. His character's contradictions are the most blatant and this young man handles the scene transitions like an old pro. Deezer is the only real hip-hop musician in the movie and he has a cut included on the soundtrack which is jammed with established artists like KRS-One, Fu-Schnickens, Teddy Riley, and PM Dawn.

This movie should hit nationwide straight outta LoCash California. S

DOCTOR DRE & ED LOVER
IN THEIR FIRST FEATURE FILM

NEW YORK CITY POLICE
WHO'S tHe MAN

AFRIKA BAMBATTA
APACHE
ERIC B
HEATHER B
SMOOTH B
BILL BELLAMY
BERNIE MAC
BIG BUB
BOWLEGGED LOU
BUSHWICK BILL
DA YOUNGSTA'S
DEL
D-NICE
MTV'S "DUFF"
CYPRESS HILL
KOOL G RAP & POLO
LEADERS OF
THE NEW SCHOOL
MTV'S "FAB 5 FREDDY"
FLAVOR FLAV
GARFIELD!
GURU
QU'RAN GOODMAN
HEAVY D.
HOUSE OF PAIN
TERRENCE DA SHON
HUMPTY HUMP
FEATURING ICE T AS "NIGHTTRAIN"
KRS-ONE
KRIS KROSS
QUEEN LATIFAH
DENIS LEARY

A WHO'S WHO OF HIP HOP!

KURT LODER
MONIE LOVE
MELLE MEL & SCORPIO
RALPH McDANIELS
NAUGHTY BY NATURE
NO FACE
KEN OBER
SALT 'N PEPA
PETE ROCK & CL SMOOTH
PHIFE
COLIN QUINN
RUN DMC AND JAY
STRETCH
SHOWBIZ & A.G.
TODD 1
YO YO

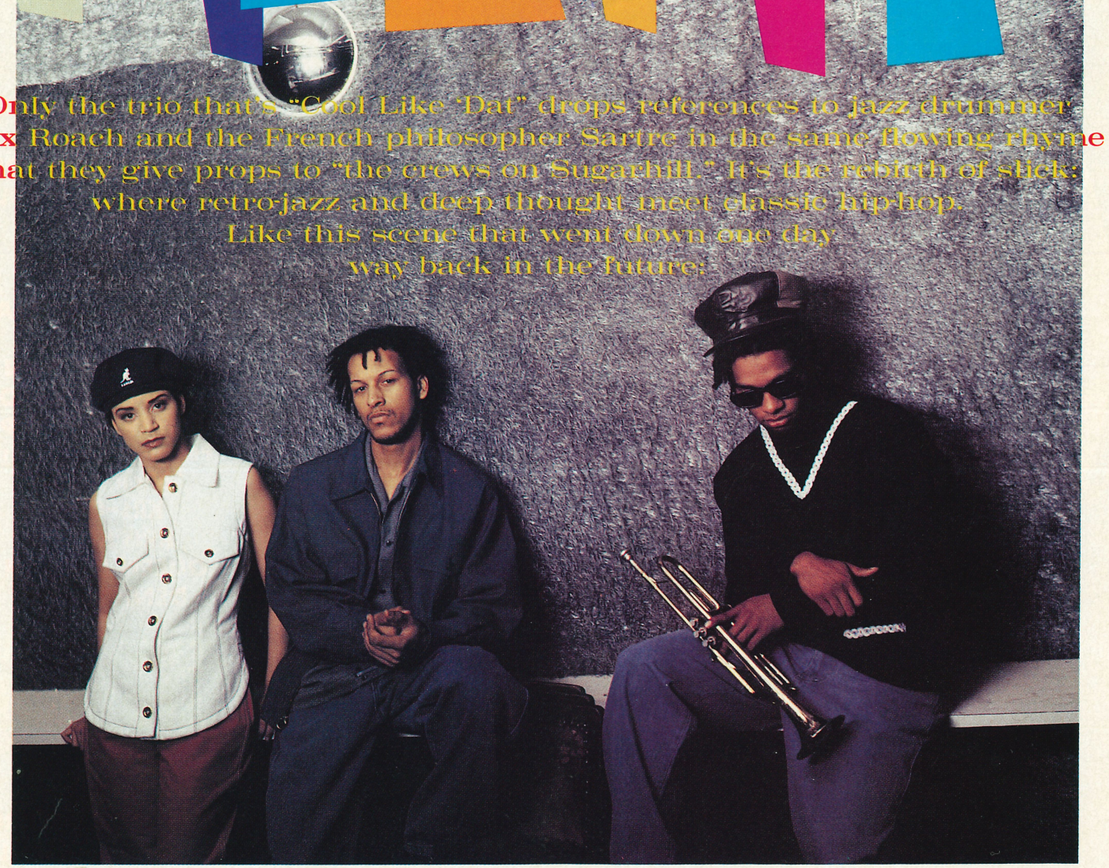
APRIL 23RD 1993
AT A THEATRE NEAR YOU

NEW LINE PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS
A TIN PAN APPLE/DePASSE ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION
A FILM BY TED DEMME · DOCTOR DRE & ED LOVER "WHO'S THE MAN?"
FLAVOR FLAV · HEAVY D · KRIS KROSS
LEADERS OF THE NEW SCHOOL · DENIS LEARY · NAUGHTY BY NATURE
QUEEN LATIFAH · RUN DMC · SALT 'N PEPA FEATURING ICE T AS "NIGHTTRAIN"
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER SUZANNE DePASSE WRITTEN BY SETH GREENLAND
PRODUCED BY MAYNELL THOMAS CHARLES STETTLER DIRECTED BY TED DEMME

THIS FILM HAS NOT YET BEEN RATED
SOUNDTRACK AVAILABLE ON UPTOWN/MCA TAPES AND CD'S
DOLBY STEREO
NEW LINE CINEMA

Digging The Planets

Only the trio that's "Cool Like "Dat" drops references to jazz drummer Max Roach and the French philosopher Sartre in the same flowing rhyme that they give props to "the crews on Sugarhill." It's the rebirth of slick: where retrojazz and deep thought meet classic hiphop. Like this scene that went down one day way back in the future.



AHMAD AND IZZY AWAKE AT 10:30, like every Saturday morning, to watch the Black Panthers' cartoon show on channel 6 and dial Isaac Hayes' 900 number 20 or 30 times. After Brother Huey stomps the last pig, Ahmad throws on a beige, crushed-velvet Kangol and is looking for the matching air sole kicks when the new Jackson Five video begins on BET. "Yo, Michael's dreads are looking dope!" Ahmad says. Izzy looks up from intense afro picking and patting. "Yeah. He's cool like dat." Izzy answers.

On the F-Train to the Village, Ahmad and Izzy plug their headphones into Ahmad's 8-Track walkman and plug themselves into the Digable Planets' album *Reachin' (A New Refutation of Time and Space)*. They've heard the album before but the cool vibes of a hip-hop Saturday make the beats sound jazzier, Butterfly's rhymes cooler, Ladybug's voice richer, Doodle Bug's food for thought tastier. It quickly turns into a ride they hope will never end, an express train to forever, eternally encased in a moment of pure hip-hop love. . . "Next stop, West Fourth Street!" the conductor calls out sooner than they hope, and eternity, as it usually does, comes up short.

West Fourth. Above ground, Ahmad and Izzy can smell the hip-hop in the zeitgeist. Baggy jeans and baseball caps

TEXT BY TOURÉ

photography by suekwon

styling by julia chance, sonya magett, kierna mayo

FOR 35 YEARS The Village Gate on Bleecker Street in New York City has been a gathering place for the jazz greats. Dizzy and Bird played there. So did Mingus and Monk. Even today it continues to be a popular venue for the greatest jazz acts around. With a tradition so rich, it was the ideal location for Butterfly, Ladybug and Doodlebug to show how cool the rebirth of slick can be.

IN HIS SOLITUDE

Doodlebug layers on the green in a striped cotton knit shirt ($54), cotton vest ($72), rayon bing jacket ($112), and big twill jeans ($74), all by Stussy, available at Stussy in NYC and Stussy-Union in L.A.

previous page

THE TRIAD

Butterfly chills in cranberry rayon bing jacket by Stussy ($112), navy linen beach shirt ($95) worn over matching cotton t-shirt ($34) both by Wilke Rodriguez; full-cut denim jeans by Unitryb ($56), available at NaNa in NYC; shades ($150) by Mossimo Optics. Ladybug wears a printed Dunaway dress ($108) by Streetlife boutiques; cowrie shell choker ($10) by Anona Concentric Adornments (212) 253-6872; large silver ring with semi-precious stone inset ($138) at Big Drop in NYC; red harness boots ($125) by NaNa, also in shoe stores nationwide. Doodlebug in a gold and black striped knit crewneck ($48) by Box Fresh, under a black leather vest by RAP ($169); both available at Union in NYC; black jeans by Welt Wear ($63) at NaNa.

For a store near you, call 1-800-678-1992

Photography by: LaQuinta Washington, Rabouin High School New Orleans, La.

VAN GRACK

RETRO MIX

Doodlebug sports a denim service jacket ($72) with a grey flannel western shirt, both by Label Whore (619) 287-0618; full cut denim jeans ($56) by Unitryb. Ladybug in a fitted denim vest ($210) by Mark E. at Big Drop; oversized red jeans ($68) by Gypsies And Thieves, (213) 489-2828; blue Kangol cap ($26) at NaNa; blue Puma Clydes ($55), for information call (800) 448-PUMA. Butterfly wears a retro styled sweater ($104) by Nigel Hall and a two-toned leather cap ($38) both at Union; denim jeans ($46) by Sport Girl; black leather Puma Clydes ($50) and shades by Mossimo Optics ($150).

standing on this corner. On that one a billboard showing Ice Cube sitting in the new BMW jeep. "Now with even more trunk space!" Cube advertises. To Ahmad and Izzy, hip-hop is church, religion and salvation, and the sacraments grow stronger every day.

Turning onto Sixth Ave., Ahmad and Izzy find themselves in a sea of hip-hop style as waves of baseball caps, hoods and all sorts of bagginess splash by them in ripples of reds, blues, browns and black. And outside Sam Goody stand two brothers in the middle of the flow, but not quite of it. Ahmad notices the taller one's easy smile, thin, button-down cardigan and old-school Stan Smith Adidas and thinks, 'he looks more like he needs to go finish studying for finals at Yale or Howard,' when Izzy taps him. Ahmad turns off their walkman and Izzy points out he is staring at one-third of the Digable Planets.

"You're right!" Ahmad replies excitedly and walks up to Butterfly with a respectful, "Peace, Brother Butter."

"Peace, G." Butterfly replies. "You coolin?"

"Yeah. I'm Ahmad and this is Izzy. We were just listening to your album on our walkman."

"Word? Like it?"

"Dope, man! But. . . what's a Digable Planet?" Ahmad says.

"To us, every person is a planet run by their brain," Butterfly says. "And you set up your planet the way you want to. It has to do with self-sufficiency, being the person who controls your destiny. Digable comes from our affinity for jazz and words that come out of the vernacular like dig and cool and bop and cat and bird and chick. And Digable describes our sound and how we feel."

"Why are you all named after insects?" Izzy asks as Ladybug walks out of the Goody and up to the group holding a bottle of Groove juice and a Charlie Parker CD.

"Because we prescribe to the insect theory," Doodle Bug answers, as he walks over from the wall of the record store where he had been leaning, listening.

"The insect theory?"

"The insect theory has to do with the communal type unity that insects have," Ladybug explains.

"The insect theory is the son of socialist readings," Butterfly continues. "Knowing where you stand in this society and knowing where you should stand. Like if you look at ants and their hill, they're always around it, protecting it. Cats is going out getting food, bringing it back. Think of *The Communist Manifesto's* last sentence, 'workers of the world unite.' In front of, '*of the world unite*,' you could put anything: it's about unity."

"Butterfly man," Ahmad says reluctantly, "I'm crazy down with your song "La Femme Fatal," about that sister gettin' an abortion. I really appreciate it."

"What do you mean?" Ladybug asks.

"Well, last year, I got my girl pregnant. And I wanted to jet, but my Moms made me stick with her. 'Be a man,' she said. Well, my girl wasn't ready for a kid, so she decided getting an abortion would be best. Neither of us was happy about it. . ."

"Nobody is." Doodle Bug says. "Nobody wants to have an abortion."

"Word. I had to start working at Tower Records to help her pay for it and go to the clinic with her when time came. The scene was rough, but I'm glad I stuck it out."

"That's crazy cool, G," Butterfly says. "We talk about abortion because we feel people that don't want women to have the choice of abortion. . . don't want a lot of people to have choices. So, that needs to be attacked as often as possible."

"Something like that shouldn't be up for debate, you know?" Ladybug says, her head heavy from thinking of the millions of women hurt by unsafe abortions. "It just shouldn't be up for discussion."

"True indeed, sister," Izzy says. The conversation concluded, they exchange soul clasps and walk their separate ways.

At the next corner, Ahmad and Izzy stop and find themselves standing between a brother wearing a J. Crew rollneck sweater who could be from uptown and another sporting Timberlands and a matching Carhartt jacket: strictly downtown. Izzy taps Ahmad and they take off their headphones, but leave the walkman on play. As Ahmad begins speaking, the brothers bookending them begin nodding their heads to the very audible, very Digable beat.

"The Digables are some cool cats." Ahmad says.

"Yeah. And in a time when the best-selling book has more exposed breasts than sentences—Madonna's *Sex*—I like that some rappers are out talking about George Orwell, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus and *The Communist Manifesto."*

"Izzy, I don't care what they've read or if they really are from some outer space ghetto. I just met them, but the music says they know me: where I'm at and where I'm from." S

HAIR AND MAKE-UP BY ALAN MARTIN•ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE BY DARLENE GILLARD AND DANIELA ROEBUCK

FLAVORS OF THE MONTH

Who got the fever for the flavor? We're back with this month's flavors: the latest in everything from pendants to T-shirts. Don't forget: if you know of something dope from around your way, send it in. . .

THE SOURCE,
"Flavors of The Month"
594 Broadway, Ste. 510,
New York, NY 10012

COMPILED AND EDITED BY KIERNA MAYO
PHOTOGRAPHS BY DIRK WESTPHAL

MOSSIMO OPTICS

Time for some shade. The "Cordoba," "Nomad," "Bertone," and "Deniro" are between $120 and $180. Available at Barney's New York, Macy's (Northern Cali), Tuckerman's (midwest) and at Optical Outlook (Southern Cali).

KIK WEAR

For $20, this underground, graffitti-inspired character comes on different flavor tees. Dope artwork courtesy of SOURCE contributor/graf legend Doze. Call to order and ask about the entire Kik Wear line of gear, 213/746-5317.

HIP-HOP ARTWORKS

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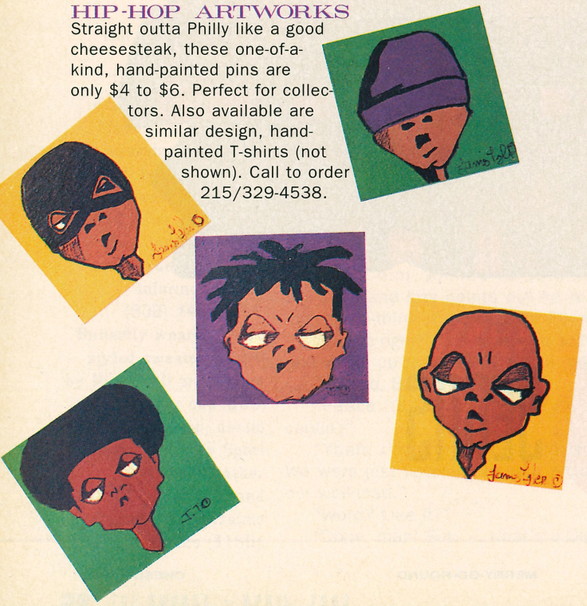

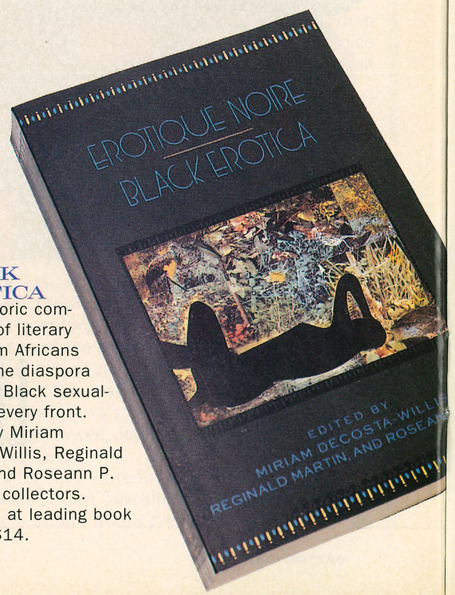

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cool blue

Back for a fourth go-round, the "overweight lover" Heavy D has grown with his craft. Rhyming about subjects that touch him, he has managed to keep on top of the scene in a genre that is quick to brush "large" artists aside.

IN THE HIP-HOP GAME, very few artists can brag about their longevity. They rhyme about how many dollars they clock, how many women they pull and how many dope rhymes they possess (not necessarily in that order). Before they know it—POOF—everyone's asking, "Whatever happened to. . . ?" Hip-hop trends change as often as some of us change our underwear, so it takes an artist who can bend and twist right along with the hip-hop roller coaster. Some rappers get stuck in a time warp and continue to churn out the same old same old, and some get caught in the trap of being too commercial or too hard or not commercial or hard enough. Of course, there is an exception to every rule. . . here comes the Heavster.

BY ELISE CHANCE

G-WIZ, EDDIE F AND HEAVY D: BRINGING BLUE FUNK TO A STEREO NEAR YOU

That's right, Heavy D is back on the scene a year after *Peaceful Journey* with some brand new R&B (not rhythm and blues but rhymes and beats). His new album is called *Blue Funk*, and Heavy D has found his own way to take the hard trend of rap and make it his own. You see, longevity for an artist depends on more than using the sample or loop de jour. It's keeping up with the Joneses without becoming one. It's going back to basics to keep yourself centered.

Heavy jumped on the scene back in 1986 with his first album, *Living Large*. "Mr. Big Stuff" and "Overweight Lover's in the House" were the two singles that helped put "money earnin' Mt. Vernon" on the map. Back in those days, Heavy D's goal was simple. "When I was younger, I never really looked at it as whether or not I'd be able to rock a crowd. Even when I made my first record, my sole intention was just to hear my record on the "Mr. Magic" show. I didn't know what I was getting into as far as the business factor of it all or that I would be such a large figure in the rap community or show business overall."

Before the release of his second album, Heavy made a move that would make him an innovator as well as spark a lot of controversy in the hip-hop nation—he made an R&B single with Levert. Since then a lot of rappers have followed suit, but not without much debate from other rappers. "I like Levert. I did that record when people were telling me *not* to do that record. Everybody's got a little R&B in their music. . . what the fuck do they think that shit is with the samples they be using? It's the same shit!"

Big Tyme was released in 1989 and

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	Average No. Copies Single issue each issue during nearest to preceding 12 months	Single issue nearest to filing date
A.Total No. Copies printed	87,107	134,000
B.Paid and/or requested circulation		
1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendorsand counter sales	36,527	58,544
2. Mail subscriptions	5,205	7,900
C.Total paid and/or requested circulation	41,732	66,444
D.Free distribution by mail carrier or other means, samples, complimentary and other free copies	4,310	1,600
E.Total Distribution	46,042	68,044
F.Copies not distributed		
1. Office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing	2,980	2,436
2.Returns from news agents	38,085	63,520
G. Total	87,107	134,000

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(Signed) David A. Watkins, General Manager

cool blue

HEAVY AND PETE ROCK IN THEIR HOME AWAY FROM HOME

thanks to hits like "We Got our Own Thing" and "Somebody For Me," suddenly Heavy was not only a rap star but an R&B star. With the production skills of Eddie F, Teddy Riley, and Marley Marl, Heavy D managed to hit the number one spot on both the rap and R&B charts. Heavy was everywhere. He liked the Sprite in you. He made guest appearances on "A Different World," "Booker" and "The Fresh Prince of Bel Air." He performed on Janet Jackson's "Alright" single and created the theme song for the hit television show "In Living Color."

At the height of the popularity, the realities of the real world hit Heavy like a brick wall. One of the Boyz, Trouble T-Roy, was accidently killed while they were on tour. Heavy's brother was also killed and that is eerily described in "A New Day" on the current LP. Out of those experiences came the third album, *Peaceful Journey*, and almost immediately, Heavy was put on the defensive as a sellout. Some people—industry and fans—accused him of not remaining true to the vibe he was giving up on his first two albums. How does Heavy describe selling out? "Selling out to me is not sticking to what you've done that's gotten you where you are. It's not sticking to your creative juices to do stuff just for the buck. I've never done that. How can you sell out when you're doing what you've always done? As an artist you can't let people dictate your artistic value because then you will become lost. No one will like or respect you. When they call Hammer a sellout. . . he came out doing what he did. He wasn't LL at first! He wasn't Treach! When people mention sellout, my longevity will prove that I'm not. Longevity shuts everybody up. You can only pop shit but so long, once I keep ripping your ass! I mean, you could call Cube a sellout 'cause he sells more to white people than Black people if the case is what audience your records are selling to."

If anyone had any doubts as to what Heavy D was selling they were put to rest with the release of the B-side of "Don't Curse" called "You Can't See What I Can See (You're Blind)." Heavy explains: "Last summer hip-hop started becoming thick and hard again, so it was time to get into that mix. I didn't want to miss that train, so I went right into the studio and made 'You're Blind.' The thing that I'm the most proud of is that I can do that. I can adapt to styles and what's going on. Nobody knew it was me at first, and then the video came out and people were shocked. The record did great and people accepted me that way."

"Blue Funk" is described by Heavy as "what it feels like, what it sounds like." He's quick to add, "It's not a depressing 'blue,' but a cool 'blue.' This album is back to basics. Now that I know myself and my craft, it's Heavy D flavor with some added twists." Some of the "twists" are courtesy of the producers he's brought on board. No Marley, Teddy, Howie Tee, or even Eddie F (who does serve as an executive producer) in this batch of funk. "Music forces you to make those changes, especially in rap because things change so much," says Heavy. "I can't stay the same. I'm not discrediting any producers that I worked with because I'm still good friends with all of them. We were looking for a different type of sound. We were trying to go a new route and in order to go a new route, you have to plant new seeds." The seeds were planted by Premier of Gang Starr, Skeff Anslem, Tony Dofat, Jesse West and of course Hev's cousin, Pete Rock, and as a result, the flavor of this album is very different than the last three. It's the hip-hop kid grown up and bringing the shit he learned from back in the day with him.

Hev is genuinely liked in the business not just because he has skills (he had Michael Jackson searching for him for a week to do "Jam," and Hev seems to be one of the few artists that can cameo on a song and come off more than the fea-

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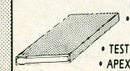

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cool blue

tured artist) but also because he remains true to himself and his environment. "You got all of these 'tough guys' talking shit. I'm not no criminal. I used to be all that shit them niggers talk about. I've seen that life, but all the real niggers I know did shit to try to get away from that life. Those kids are fake. They believe their own videos and hype."

Heavy is very focused about his career and offers no apologies about being a star since he works hard for it. Anyone special in the picture for Heavy? "Naw. . . 'cause I'm the type that wants to be with mine, and right now I'm busy. I can't be sitting around wondering who's fuckin' my girl!"

One of the things he's busy with these days is his independent label, for which he will make a solo dancehall record called *Music For Life*. He's already signed artists, including Rob-O, who appeared on Pete Rock and CL's "The Basement" and on Heavy's newest posse cut "A Bunch Of Niggas." "The record company is for my people that want to do that kind of thing," he says. Aside from this, Hev is also getting ready to shoot a television pilot called "Livin' Large" (one of the new television projects that Uptown will be putting together as per their new multi-million dollar deal with MCA) this summer while looking at various film scripts.

What it all boils down to is this: Heavy D's longevity comes from the fact that he is a man of the people with friends from all walks of life. Q-Tip once remarked that his mother enjoyed Heavy D's music. Two employees in the building where I was interviewing Hev were talking about Heavy D as if he was their own friend or even son. What does Heavy D attribute to his longevity? "Listening to what's going on is one thing. I didn't have this 'image.' There's nothing extra for me to live up to. Fads always play out because people get tired of toys. A fad is nothing but a toy." As he spoke, the Uptown Records phone was ringing off of the hook, but he continued. "If you keep yourself simple in your aura, persona and attitude, everybody can relate to you. I just wanna be respected by everybody; I just wanna be cool. . ." he said, reaching over and answering the phone, "Uptown." S

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AT 27-YEARS-OLD, MARTIN LAWRENCE HAS THE WORLD LAUGHING TO HIS NAUGHTY-BUT-NICE BRAND OF HIP-HOP HUMOR. HE'S DOING THINGS HIS WAY AND IT FEELS GREAT.

Backstage at New York's Academy Theater, I find comedian-actor Martin Lawrence maxin' between tapings of "The Russell Simmons Def Comedy Jam." He's flanked by several tall, beefy brothers watching his back. We're all packed into his fan-proof dressing room watching an Atlanta Hawks game. Beside the TV lies a lavish spread of fruits, veggies and a variety of other eats. The walls are covered with streakless mirrors and a striking black and white Herb Ritts print of a bare-chested beauty. A cool grin slips across Martin's mug. Laughing heartily with his boys, he plans new jokes for the next taping and gets a shape-up from a lean kid with clippers in hand.

All the while, more of Martin's extended East Coast posse pile into this private space to chill. We're joined by New York Knicks' Charles Smith and his mink-clad wife Lisa. Noting their entrance and Lisa's obvious fondness of fur, Martin quips, "Wazz-up Lisa! Where you get that dog?" An unembarrassed Lisa just laughs, as do we all.

This is typical Martin.

Off camera, Martin, the man himself, enjoys a lifestyle of absolute realness. Employing various childhood partners as security, Martin credits his close-knit crew of friends, family and management for keeping him levelheaded. "If anything has truly helped me it's having good people around me that are not afraid to say what they feel about me. If my friends disagree they'll let you know in a minute and say, 'Hey, I think we need to talk about this.'"

When Martin arrives on stage to a standing ovation of cheers and laughter, the crowd inside the theater is hyped. His timing as the show's host is precise, almost rhythmic. When he's at the mic, no one is safe from his razor-sharp audience-inclusive monologues, including gays, virgins, nerds, nymphs and oh yes, the less-endowed crowd. "No one is immune to a joke," he confesses. "When you look at laughter, you look at hurt. With a smile comes a frown. So if something happens that is terrible, I can take it and find a way to make you laugh at it and say, 'Hey, yeah it is fucked up, but let's try to laugh while were up here.'"

Earlier that day I met up with Martin in the Soho offices of The Source. Surrounded by his own back up, he sits comfortably in our makeup chair, sporting a brown pullover and a Cheshire cat smile as he prepares for an extensive photo shoot. The brother is still on a high from his Fox show "Martin" having just won the coveted NAACP Image Award for Best New Television Series. We're grooving to Dr. Dre's album *The Chronic*—especially the cut "Lil' Ghetto Boy"—as Martin strikes a few poses for our cameraman. Martin is dancing and laughing, appearing as he is. A natural.

After the shoot, he easily confides, "When I accepted the Image Award I couldn't believe that I was up there." His surprise stemmed largely from the fact that it was only mid-season when "Martin" won its nomination and later its award. "To be doing a show the way you want to do it was lettin' me know I'm followin' my instincts and all them years have finally paid off." Long gone are the days of his youth in Landover, Maryland, where trying to get discovered meant buffing floors at the local K-Mart by day and doing the stand-up comedy thing by night.

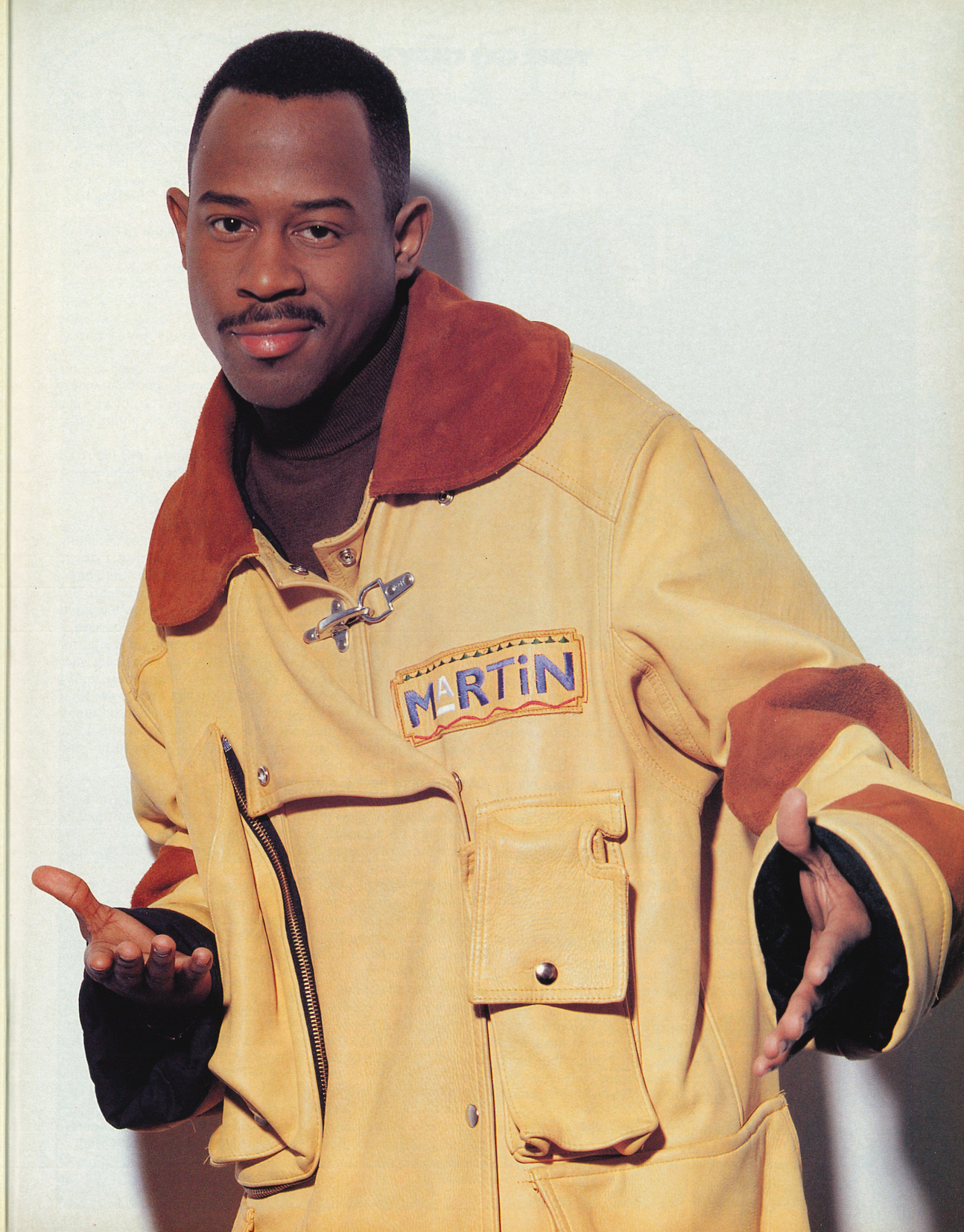
In high school, Martin was the class clown who electrified the classroom when things got boring. "I was always a hyper kid and could never stay still," he boasts. "I'd much rather be up in front of the class makin' them laugh, so it became practice for me." Today viewers can see the results of that same practice weekly on "Martin," in which he portrays an assertive Detroit radio talk show host and a number of other eccentric characters. Among them is Sheneneh, television's only real "around the way girl." Despite this season's explosion of new sitcoms featuring Black casts, "Martin" is perhaps the only one that successfully portrays a slice of urban reality. The show tends to exemplify the comedian's own beliefs in love, cultural pride and the Black family unit. And the on-screen love thang between Martin and upscale girlfriend Gina (Tisha Campbell) is a true-to-heart depiction of a '90s brotherman, his woman and their relationship.

"NO ONE IS IMMUNE TO A JOKE. WHEN YOU LOOK AT LAUGHTER, YOU LOOK AT HURT. WITH A SMILE COMES A FROWN."

Couch potatoes may recall Martin back in the day as the smart-ass busboy in Raj and Shirley's diner in the TV series "What's Happening Now! His raw candor and bawdy comedy style earned him his first film role in Spike Lee's *Do The Right Thing,* which led to memorable roles in *House Party, House Party II,* and last year's smash summer hit *Boomerang* with co-star Eddie Murphy. At age 27, Martin has carved out an incredible career that continues to make him hip-hop's favorite flavor in comedy entertainment.

In person Martin doesn't appear to be suped, despite having so often been compared to Eddie. "To finally work with Eddie Murphy was a dream come true for me," he says. Although he may have aspired to be as successful as his heroes, Murphy and Richard Pryor, Martin quickly points out that the compar-

by Eric D. Hatcher



MARK CONTRATTO

YOU GO GUY!

isons end there. "It's a compliment in one sense, but I know I'm not Eddie Murphy. I can't be Eddie Murphy, I can only be Martin Lawrence. I had to adopt my own style, I had to go for it and that's what I did. I constantly worked on bein' myself and now I'm gettin' the respect of my peers."

At one point during our interview, Martin seems distracted. I look up, and he is blowing kisses and smiles to the hungry wails and shout outs of onlookers who spotted us from an adjacent window. "I think success has made me more aware of my value in the business," he says. "It's made me more business-oriented and look at life more seriously. You can get so caught up in the success of things that you don't stop to take a look at the big picture." For Martin, "family values and stability with the right woman" are the things that really matter in his life.

THE SOURCE: You appear so at ease. Are you a very spiritual person?

MARTIN LAWRENCE: Most definitely. I'm not perfect, I'm only a man. I have my faults, but I know without God none of this is possible.

What was your childhood like, growing up as an army brat?

Well, you know, what can I say? My father was in the service and I was born in Germany, but that's all I remember about the service. Once he and my mother split up, you know hey, I'm like every other kid without a father. Mom's playin' a mother and a father.

What about your family? How have they responded to your success?

They are very happy. I wouldn't say surprised, because when they found out this is what I wanted to do, they always told me 'You can make it, you can do it, you have to keep pushing.' My family is very supportive of me, I'm the only one that's in the entertainment business. They're like 'Wow! We thought you could be successful, but wow! Things are really happening for you.'

Do you see yourself giving back to the community? How are you paying your dues today?

I give back to the community in ways that I don't have to talk about. I think when you got to talk about it or point the finger at what you did and what you give to, and you want to call a conference 'cause you're giving money to this charity. . . I mean yo, who you want to know you're doin' good is God and yourself. That's all that matters, and the people you're giving to. So the things I do for people I don't need to talk about. They know.

Do a lot of people challenge your input as one of the creative consultants behind your TV show?

Most definitely.

How do you deal with that?

I just stand my ground. But most definitely I have input. If it's something I don't believe in, you can't pimp me in the game. I will not submit to what you want me to do. I have to do it my way and I have to feel good about it or I won't do it at all. You see, I love what I do and what makes it easier for me to do these things is that I am doing what I want to do. All coming up in the business I had people telling me what I could say, what I couldn't say, what I could do, what I couldn't do. Now I'm doing things the way I want to do them. So when I go out on the road and thousands of people come to see me perform, I am doing exactly what I want to do, and I try to give them a helluva show.

Do you miss having a private life?

I still have a private life because I'm constantly around friends and family that allow me to have private time. If I want private time I go on vacation. If you say private time as in walking down the street and people calling your name and stuff like that—hey, when you choose to get in this business you choose to accept all of that. So yeah, when you're out in the street your private time is your fan's private time, you gotta respect that. You can't get pissed off at them.

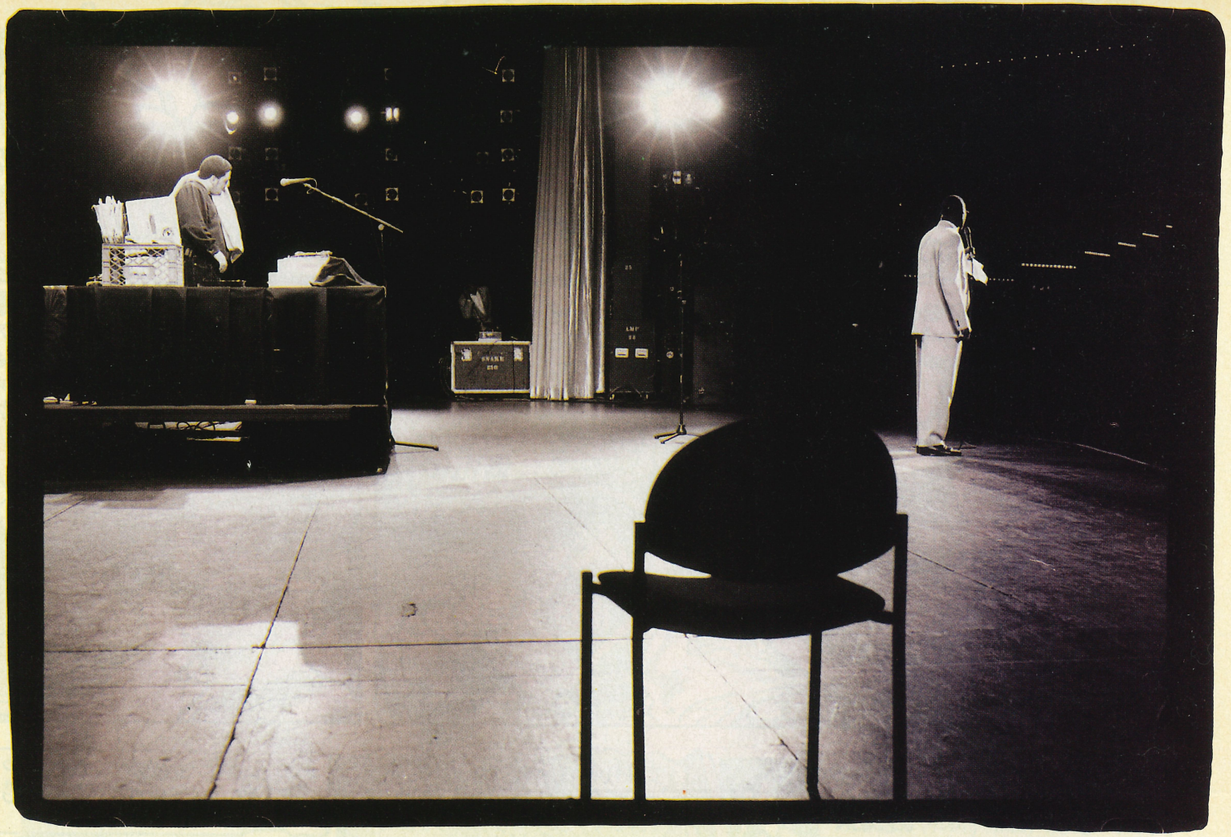
So do you feel you have 'arrived?'

Yeah, I feel like I have 'arrived' any time Michael Jackson asks to meet me.

What was that like?

That was a trip because I never thought in a million years Michael Jackson would send somebody to get me and want to meet me. So yeah, but I don't go 'I have arrived' in the sense where I could just sit back or whatever. I don't feel that I have peaked yet. I think the best is yet to come for me, especially in movies, as long as the fans continue to support me and what I'm doin.' In '93 I will be shooting my concert movie, which I am very excited about. I've always wanted to give people a quality concert movie and to hopefully bring concert movies back on the map. Oh, most definitely, the best is yet to come. S

MARK CONTRATTO



A FAMILY AFFAIR

BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE DEF COMEDY JAM, THERE'S OFTEN MORE THAN ONE SHOW TO WATCH

by Jeffrey Rabhan

Have you seen my hat? Which one of you motherfuckers stole my hat?" blared headliner Eddie (Nigga With A Hat) Griffin. "I got a show to do and it can't be done naked." Flashing a quick wink my way, Eddie ventured back to the buffet table just hours before curtain-raising time at the New York City stop of Russell Simmons' Def Comedy Jam Tour. Due to the overnight success of the HBO Def Comedy Jam, they took the show on the road for a national tour that rocked dozens of cities. "Grab yourself a sandwich or somethin' and come with me!" Eddie hollered. "You want this story, right?"

Zipping through the back rooms of the Paramount Theater at Madison Square Garden was impossible, for we constantly hit roadblocks. Each stairway and door was guarded by a member of the Def Jam front line crew: six-feet-six inches and 275 pounds of nasty beef looking to bite your ass clean off unless that magic ALL ACCESS pass appeared quick. But the pass gives more than just access; it offers automatic acceptance with every person working the gig. "You got that pass. That means somebody wants you here, and you a guest of this show. And a guest of this show gets my respect. I got your back," explained Ray. And if you saw the size of Ray, that would make you feel pretty good.

Once through the checkpoint of pain, Eddie and I looked everywhere—the dressing rooms, the offices, the lounges—for anyone on the bill: MC and host Bernie Mac, Reggie McFadden, Bill Bellamy or Adele Givens. But none of them were dressing, dealing with managers or lounging. All of the stars were hanging out stage left fooling around and carrying on. Together.

"This ain't a show about dissing each other, egos and managers," said "Papa Bear" Bernie Mac, showing a dead serious look. "This ain't bullshit. Bullshit ain't nothin' but chewed up grass anyway. We got a family here and we stick out for each other. I treat everyone with love and I keep respect like that." And you could feel that love warming up each comic and crew member. When Kid Capri entered with his boys (wearing the fly Def Comedy Jam jackets) hugs went around the house before the 12-inch singles were unpacked. I even saw him hug some people he just met. "Yo, that's just me, you know? I'm here to mix it up and have a good time. This ain't no job. . . it's a house party. And I'm the DJ."

Five minutes to the show and Bob Sumner, VP of talent, was frantically searching for Reggie McFadden. "Where the fuck is he?" I didn't want to tell him that Reggie and Bernie Mac were hiding behind the curtain just to piss him off. But when the stage curtain went up and Capri yelled "SOMEBODY SCREAM!" to a sold out congregation, McFadden was exposed. I don't think the scream I heard when Sumner's clipboard connected with Reggie's ass was the kind of scream Capri was inviting.

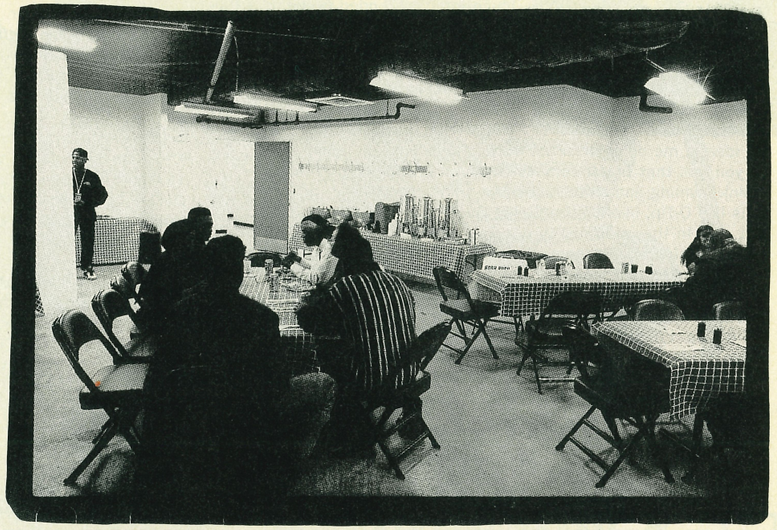
CHI MODU

The Def Comedy Jam prides itself as the bridge between hip-hop culture and the rising power and visibility of Black comedy. By blending raw, honest street-smart humor with the juice of a mighty DJ, this brainchild of Russell Simmons and director/producer Stan Lathan ("Martin," "Roc") is bringing a fresh, new mode of comedy to the stage. "We got something happening here that no one has ever seen before—flavor," said Russell. "We got music, we got dancing, and we got comedy. And no one has ever done anything like it before. And the combination of the three elements creates a whole new vibe. It's no longer comedy. We got a show on our hands." But at times, I wondered where the show was—out in front of the crowd of 5,000 people, or backstage in my face.

I set up backstage about 20 feet away from Capri's platform of turntables. Hidden by the side of the curtain but wedged into an open gap between stage and backstage, my seat was perfect. And with the show kickin' off with a 15 minute assault of Kid Capri, I could do nothing but drop my pen and watch. Slamming through mixes of Quest, PE, Jackson 5, Puba, Daddy Freddy, and the Ice brothers (T and Cube, that is), people tore out of their seats to get to the aisles in order to shake. Once all the comedians saw where I was sitting, they wanted to be there too. At one point, Bill Bellamy and Eddie Griffin tried to muscle me out of the way, but Big Ray came to my rescue: "Can't you see my boy Slim is tryin' to write a fuckin' story?" Meanwhile, Adele Givens was slow dancing with the suited Bernie Mac (cigarette in one hand, bottled Evian in the other) while Reggie McFadden was on stage. I didn't know which act to watch.

The show launched with spectacular energy, but the people napped at times. With Bellamy due up next, he peeked through the curtain for a look. "Damn! That sure don't sound like 5,000 people out there." Capri chimed in: "Word. But the hardest crowd to satisfy is New York. If they don't like you, it's over. I mean over." But Bellamy wasn't going out like a deadbeat. When that spotlight hit, he hit that turbo-fanny button. "Yo. . . you women are smooth. I mean, real smooth. You know what I'm sayin'? Y'all be looking at my shit but I can't see it. Nooooo. Now when a man wants it, you know it. And when he gets it. . . OOOHHH! We be slammin' that shit, until we bust that nut. Men? Y'all ever busted a nut and woken up three days later it was so good?"

Bellamy got 'em going, but as hard as people were laughing, Eddie and Bernie were howling harder. Eddie was on the ground with his legs up in the air, begging for help. But Bernie was saving a little something. After Bellamy lit the fire, Bernie walked out to center stage nice and calm, then burnt the house down. "Let me ask y'all a question. Ain't the world fucked up when Magic gets AIDS and Little Richard is healthy as a motherfucker?" And walked off stage just as smooth.



BACKSTAGE, THE COMICS HAVE A MEAL AND A SNAP SESSION, WARMING UP FOR THE TASK OF MAKING 5,000 PEOPLE LAUGH

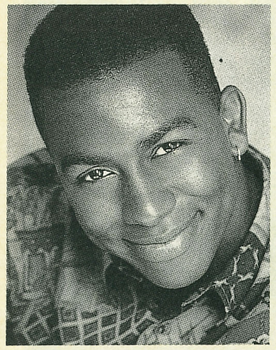
Someone with a headset grabbed Eddie to tell him it was time to go on, because he was too busy kickin' imaginary ass while shadowboxing in the corner. A former jazz dance instructor from Kansas City, this little bundle of energy knew how to put the crowd in his pocket. Blending uproarious impersonations of Michael Jackson with straight-up socio/political satire ("I went to the li-bury. . . that's where y'all bury your lies at"), Griffin proved his worth. By looking at the funny side of oppression, he touched universal chords with aspects of life in the city, the 'hood, and even the pathetic happenings in LA that everyone could understand and relish. "Rodney King said, 'Can't we all just get along?' Doesn't that nigga know that's what got us in trouble in the first place?"

After Eddie, Capri flipped the switch, the DJC dancers turned it out and the house lights went up. And as the crowd filed out, I had some time to organize my perceptions of the entire affair. The comedy was on, Kid Capri pumped the place up, and the dancers sent everyone home feeling good. But what makes Def Comedy Jam so unique is the positive vibe given off by each and every person involved in the show. The sincere care and appreciation for the gift of laughter shown by each comedian for one another was contagious. I had complete access, and no one gave a damn if I walked into a dressing room, drank a beer, or made myself a Dagwood Bumstead sandwich from the buffet table. That same love Bernie Mac spoke of was shown to me, and I just didn't expect it.

"The Def Comedy Jam deals with real people. Never before have there been so many talented Black comics, and it makes my job tough," said Bob Sumner. "But when it's all said and done, we are about love, and we give props. Believe me, it's no act. These folks are happy to be here." And why not? The Def Comedy Jam is more than just a comedy production. It is a tremendous party that celebrates the music, the politics, and the attitudes that hip-hop culture created. And you don't have to be a star, 'cause everyone's invited. S

A CAFÉ CHAT ABOUT HIP-HOP, COMEDY AND FIRST LOVE WITH

REGGIE Mc FADDEN



I still drive though here [Crown Heights, Brooklyn] on occasion, just to check things out. I've never forgotten where I come from—that's important to me," says Reggie McFadden with the massive Kool Aid smile.

He has reason to smile. McFadden is blowing up from coast to coast right along with his colleagues in the Def Comedy Jam Tour. What began as a lunch interview ended up being a full-day event.

THE SOURCE: First off, do you like hip-hop music?

REGGIE MCFADDEN: I love hip-hop, I listen to too much hip-hop. I can rhyme a little—Kid Capri and I play around with the idea of me being an artist from time to time on tour.

Do you feel that Black comedy is a form of hip-hop culture?

I think rhyming and comedy are the same. The type of comedy that I do is like Q-Tip, like A Tribe Called Quest's style—it's not hardcore or soft, it's in the middle. I'm not Paul Mooney, he comes off harsh, that's considered hardcore. I'm versatile and I have little innuendos that have messages behind them. But most of my comedy can be heard and enjoyed by all people.

So you're considered a crossover artist?

No, no, no. I'm just versatile. Another thing: I write jokes all the time. I have a joke book just as rhymers have a rhyme book. With Def Comedy Jam, people look at it as hip-hop related because of Kid Capri and the music that's used. Depending on their style, some rhymers can relate to Black comedians.

How can they relate?

Well, someone like Paul Mooney doesn't pull any punches—he holds nothing back, and a lot of rhymers look at him and say, 'that's how I write my shit.' The only difference is that we don't have music. . . You know, you remind me of a b-girl.

What's a b-girl mean to you?

A b-girl is a loud-ass woman who has no fucking manners.

So I have no fucking manners?

No, no, no. You kinda of remind me of one. Certain things about you. You have street knowledge, but you can swing in different settings.

You like b-girls?

Yeah, I like to hang out with them. I like loud women, but it's no difference, when you get them home they're all the same. Know what I mean Sophia?

My name is Monet.

I know that!

Why did you call me Sophia?

You remind me of her.

Who is she, some b-girl?

No. I'll tell you why you remind me of her, you have the same face. This particular girl set me up. I couldn't stand her. I was in fifth grade and Sophia wrote this letter to me saying, 'I hate you and I know you hate me, meet after school. I wanna beat you up!' I confronted her with the letter in my hand and I said, 'You wanna meet me after school? OK, I'll meet you after school.' I threw the letter in the garbage and went to class. The period next to the last, the principal came in my class, pulled me by the ear into the hallway. I was accused of attempting to beat Sophia up after school. I said, 'No, she threatened me with a letter.' He then asked for the letter as proof. I went to check the garbage.

And it wasn't there right? She took the letter and passed it off as you? [*He nods.*] So then what happened?

We weren't allowed to talk or even look at each other. After that I hated her even more! Deep down inside I think I liked her.

I think she liked you too. The food here is pretty good, ya know?

Oh! Now that you see Wesley Snipes in here eating, all of a sudden the food is good. It wasn't good enough when it was just a place Reggie picked, now that Wesley eats in here it's the greatest!

S. MONET WAHLS

DR. HUTCHERSON'S GUIDE TO MOTHER JOKES

Mother jokes. I'm told they have some positive purpose. I am aware of some people who don't understand them. I have always felt that understanding is the key to all things productive. So let me help as much as I can with the anatomy of the mother joke.

Most people begin with: "Your mother so" followed by an adjective that will be the straight line of the joke. However, it is acceptable to begin with, "That's why, your mother," even if what follows is not an explanation.

Please keep in mind: one can never begin with "this is why" or "this is the reason your mother" because it throws off the cadence of the joke. Then what follows is either an adjective or a physical deformity.

Please also keep in mind: if an adjective is used, it may be exaggerated, but it must be something that is clear to a casual observer—i.e. your mother is so fat, ugly, short, stupid, etc. One can never say, for instance, "your mother is so riddled with joint pain. . ." because it wouldn't be clear to the casual observer. If a deformity is used, the more outrageous the better. Wooden legs and various mouths on random body parts are proven laugh getters.

Once all of these elements are in place you simply—and this is the true essence of the mother joke—have to come to a somewhat logical conclusion. The secret is logic. Here is an example: Your mother so stupid she went to see *Juice* and took a cup. You understand, if someone's mother were very stupid, taking a cup for the movie *Juice* would be for her a logical thing to do. Another example, submitted by my good friend Hugh Moore is: your mother so fat they won't let her have an X jacket because helicopters keep trying to land on her back. Once again, the logic is in place: this is obviously a very large mother.

I hope that in some small way I have helped or augmented your understanding. If there is anything else I can help you with please don't hesitate to call.

Warren Hutcherson is a stand-up comic and a staff writer for Saturday Night Live.

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THE TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY OF CHARLIE BARNETT

by Neal Brennan

CHARLIE WORKS THE CROWD ON HIS HOME TURF: WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK IN NEW YORK'S GREENWICH VILLAGE

One of the first times I entered Washington Square Park in New York's Greenwich Village, I saw a crowd of people surrounding the fountain in the center of the park. What, I asked myself, could possibly get these hundreds of people to stop and look? As I got closer to the fountain, the crowd exploded with laughter. This added to the puzzle—what could make New Yorkers, Black and white alike, laugh uncontrollably in this setting? As I made my way through the crowd, the puzzle became clear to me. Charlie Barnett, the little engine that could, stood in the center of the fountain. He told a joke: "There's good and bad in everything. So what's good about crack? Crack brought the price of pussy down to five dollars!" As the crowd howled with laughs, he ran around the perimeter of the fountain holding his dick. Damn, I thought to myself, this nigga's crazy. . . but funny as shit!

I vaguely remembered seeing his face somewhere before, but could not place it. As I got to know him better, I learned that he was the star of the film *DC Cab* and countless episodes of "Miami Vice," playing the parts of Tyrone and Noogie Man, respectively. Both of these projects took place in the early eighties. But here he was almost ten years later back in the park. I wondered why he wasn't livin' large in LA. I mean, he had worked with huge talents: Dice Clay, Eddie Murphy, Whoopie Goldberg, Robin Williams, Paul Rodriguez, Martin Lawrence, Damon Wayans. All of them had fruitful careers, so why didn't he?

Charlie started doing shows in the park in 1976. The park was filled with temptations: wine, women, pipes and needles. Hard for a twenty-year-old male with a pocket full of loose bills to resist. He was a comedian by day, glutton by night. At the turn of the decade, he was becoming renowned for his shows; agents and producers came flocking to the park to see him. Charlie's shows were a two hour light-speed train making station stops anywhere from the racially conscious ("Why don't the KKK come to Harlem? We could use the sheets!") to the totally ridiculous ("I don't care what you say or what you think, Ed Koch and Frank Perdue are the same motherfucker!").

After landing the spots in *DC Cab* and "Miami Vice," Charlie's career was peaking. He signed a three-picture deal with Columbia. He was a rabid dog of a performer, but a leash called drug addiction kept him from going any further. Just as he was about to reach his goal, his leash would jerk him back; he might bark at his target a bit more, but in vain he would go whimpering back to his little corner, Washington Square Park.

He had squandered his money, mostly on drugs, cocaine and occasionally heroin. Street shows once again were his only income, so the less-expensive crack became his drug of choice. He would do crack for the next nine years, off and on, but mostly on. In his clean periods, he would usually land a part in a film. But the clean periods were few and far between and he ended up doing only three low-budget films in nine years. I say only three films because he was capable of so many more. But his leash was getting tighter and tighter.

In late 1990, Charlie was ready to make a full-fledged effort at show business success. He started performing in clubs again. He got a manager. A year later, he taped "Showtime At The Apollo" and rocked the house. Charlie seemed to have beat his addiction, telling the audience, "I've been clean for six months, give me a hand." The audience applauded wholeheartedly. He was in fact not clean though; he was as addicted to crack as he had ever been.

Charlie taped HBO's "Def Comedy Jam" and again had a slammin' set, but unfortunately his spot never aired. In late summer 1992, he was to tape MTV's "Half Hour Comedy Hour." I spent that day with him. He complained of numbness in his left hand and leg. He did his set, but it was abysmal. His speech was slurred and his heart wasn't in it. His leash had finally strangled him. Charlie went to the hospital a few days later; his gluttonous lifestyle had induced a stroke.

He tried a few more park shows, disguising his limp as a strut, his lisp as a dialect. But he no longer had the stamina. He spent the fall indoors, trying to rehabilitate himself. He stopped smoking crack and even cigarettes. He was totally clean. He wanted to perform again. Unfortunately his stroke did not stop. His leash of addiction had been severed but a leash of sickness had taken over. Charlie Barnett was diagnosed as having AIDS.

For six months, Charlie's condition has worsened. His body has atrophied in ways no one could have imagined. Most of his motor skills are gone, he can barely walk, and worst of all, his speech has become unintelligible. This is due to the lack of adequate health care that he is entitled to but cannot afford.

Charlie has enriched our lives with his big smile, goofy antics, wisdom, and most of all, his sense of humor. And now that his well-being is in the hands of others, it is up to his friends and fans to make the rest of his life as good as his art. S

CHI MOON

To make a donation to help Charlie Barnett, send checks and letters of support to:
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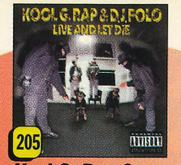

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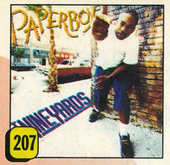

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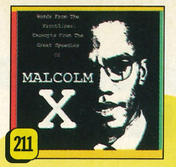

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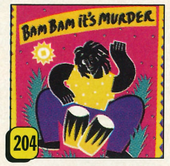

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UPTOWN IS KICKIN' IT!

A BLACK-OWNED COMEDY SPOT IN HARLEM MAKES ITS MARK

The Uptown Comedy Club is located in the heart of Harlem, on 125th Street and Fifth Avenue. Owned by two brothers, Kevin and Andre Brown, the club has been a vehicle for many Black comedians who have gone on to huge success—Chris Rock, Michael Winslow (Police Academy), Paul Mooney and the late Robin Harris have all broke in new material first at the club. Now, The UCC is featured on Fox-TV, Saturdays at midnight, showcasing an array of characters who perform in skits and stand-up routines.

"I can remember it clearly," says Ronda Fowler, a member of the Uptown posse, as she looks back on how her career began. "I came to see some comedians perform and the host, who happened to be Kevin Brown [the co-owner] was wack. He had a wack haircut. I began heckling him and he tried to dis me, but I came back at him every time one better and the crowd was going wild. I was so funny that at the end of the night the people who worked there asked if I was a comedian, so I said, 'Yeah, sure, I guess I am.' They wanted me to come back and perform."

Now that the club's inner circle is on TV every week, how does it feel? "We went from having eight people in the audience to a packed house. I grew with them but I was pretty insecure about being on the show, I didn't think I was quite ready. Fortunately, I have good managers and they were able to work with nurturing me and everyone else. At the time it was mentioned, we weren't ready for a lot of things that doing a television show entailed. But once we collected our thoughts, we got our act together and worked as a group. That made a difference because we worked together."

The Uptown Comedy Club offers free workshops assisting new talent in developing their acts and offering constructive criticism towards comedians' material. "Andre Brown is pretty much the creative person when it comes to helping develop new comedians," says Ronda. "You go in with your new material, he breaks down each joke, tells you where you went wrong, and it helps. You learn how to do tags and punchlines, timing, the essence of observing your audience, and how to develop your own personality."

After getting over the TV jitters, Ronda has found some things in the world of comedy need changing. "There is another level that I want to conquer as far as skits are concerned. I want to deal with a female's perceptive. I don't wanna be like the 'In Living Color' shows where women are always the supporting member. That bothers me because it's always the man's life and story. I like what Carol Burnett did with comedy, she's my idol, she's done it all!"

CARLOS FELEZ

Eighteen-year-old Corwin Moore is the youngest of the Uptown Comedy Club's posse. "I was introduced to comedy through a class I took in 10th Grade," he explains. "The instructor was a former stand-up comic. If you did well in the class he would take you to a live comedy club where you could see first-hand what it takes to be a comedian. When I first entered the Uptown Comedy Club I knew it was different. When you go to other comedy clubs you have to stand on line and take a number, the show starts at eight sharp, they tell you where you have to stand and how long your set can be. But the Uptown Comedy Club's policy was simple: stand where you wanna stand, you can take as long as you like, the show is supposed to start at eight, but we're gonna wait on some more people to come in. The atmosphere at the Uptown Comedy Club is real laid back and relaxed. It's like family."

S. MONET WAHLS

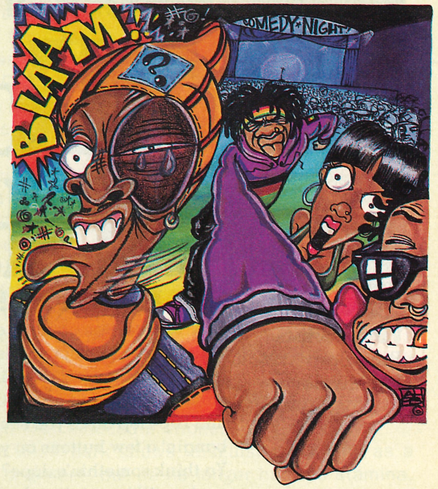
STOP, YOU'RE KILLING ME. . .

THE LOS ANGELES STAND-UP SCENE: COMIC BRILLIANCE AND CLUB BRAWLS

It is not up to me to speculate how ideas like "In Living Color" or "Def Comedy Jam" were spawned, but The Comedy Act Theatre had to be inspiring to both. In 1985, Michael Williams opened The Act in the Crenshaw district of South Central Los Angeles—the first Black-owned, Black improvisation/comedy club in the country.

"Michael saw a market that had not yet been tapped," said his sister Sharon, manager of The Act. "So he opened The Comedy Act Theatre not only for the monetary aspect, but more importantly to be a showcase for Black comedians who had trouble 'crossing over' in the whiter rooms." The Comedy Act is a place where the comics can be as Black as they want to be, but at the same time they must live up to the expectations of their predecessors. And the kids at The Act got some big shoes to fill—the late Mr. Robin Harris was the house MC from the club's inception until the time of his death in 1991.

Another Black comedy showcase in LA takes place at the Comedy Store on Sunset Boulevard—a launching pad for the careers of Damon Wayans, Eddie Griffin, Martin Lawrence and countless others. Based on these successes, The Store now has "Black Comedy Night" every Monday. I attended one of these nights in January. Though the comics here don't have to worry about being Black, they do have to worry about being shot, as do the audiences.



ANTHONY HARRISON

I was standing in the Belly Room, the small upstairs space which was featuring all Black comics. Eddie Griffin was ending his one man, hour-and-a-half, sold-out show in the main room downstairs, which holds about four hundred people. As his exit music came up, about five different fights broke out in the audience. One skirmish reportedly involved gangbangers approaching Treach and 2Pac, who were watching the show. The fight was the first to be broken up by security, but other brawls rumbled on. I ran downstairs to see what was up. My first sight was of a woman in convulsions on the floor, while a pregnant woman came to her aid. The next was of a .44. I decided that it was time to go.

I went across the street and watched as people with guilty consciences fled the scene. The first cop car to show up got its back window shot out by one of the hundred nearby people. Ten minutes later, there were fifteen cop cars and a surveillance helicopter surrounding the joint. Not exactly the brand of comedy that Robin Harris had in mind.

On nights that there aren't mini-riots, The Comedy Store is a great place for Black and white comics to showcase their talents for large audiences and Hollywood players looking for the next big thing. My advice: watch your backs.

NEAL BRENNAN

DAVID CHAPPELLE

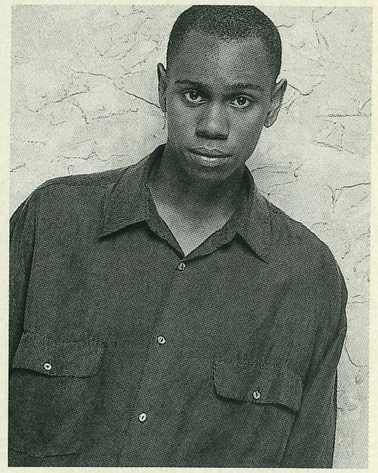
THE LAID-BACK TERROR by Neal Brennan

By nature, David Chappelle is an aggressive person. "When I was in junior high, I got suspended 23 times. I used to pull the fire alarm almost every day, 'till one of the teachers finally said, 'No more false alarms.' So I set the fire and pulled that shit again." This story is partially fabricated for his act, except for the part about being suspended. In his youth, Chappelle was truly a terror.

One day, young David was sitting in his Washington, DC bedroom plotting new ways to vent his aggressions. He picked up a copy of *Time* magazine and began reading about Bill Cosby. David had never tried stand-up comedy before and the stage seemed to be the place to get out the most aggression while getting in the least amount of trouble. So he went to the nearest open mic and tried to sign up. They said he couldn't get in because he was too young. He was 14 years old at the time, so he went home and got his mother, who escorted him into the club. He went on stage that night, got his aggressions out, and managed to get laughs. He hasn't stopped since.

After graduating from Duke Ellington High School for the Arts in 1991, Chappelle moved to New York City. In the past 17 months, he has appeared in 18 national television comedy shows, one film called *Undercover Blues*, and a sitcom pilot for Fox.

Though his stand-up style is extremely laid-back, his aggressive attitude knows no bounds. After hearing that he was to do the "Aresnio Hall Show," he called his manager asking if he could get more work. His manager reminded him that he was in the middle of shooting his second film, tentatively titled *Robin Hood: Men In Tights*, directed and written by Mel Brooks. David remembered, "Oh, that's why I'm so tired." In the film, to be released August 31, David plays the role of Achoo. It is one of the biggest parts in the film, the character being an aggressive, militant brother in the Middle Ages. For this 19-year-old veteran of comedy, it'll hardly be a stretch.



GLENN JUSSEN

TONY WOODS INTERVIEWS TONY WOODS

CHI MODU

Hello, my name is Tony Woods. I am a comedian from Washington DC. I have lived in New York City since September.

TONY: How do you feel about the Black comedy explosion?

TONY: I'm glad to be a part of it. . .

TONY: Yes, but how do you feel about it? You didn't answer the question.

TONY: Shut up man, this is my interview. See, just like Negro League baseball, it was bound to happen.

TONY: Have you ever done a show like Evening At The Improv?

TONY: I have done shows like that, but not that one. And the way this interview is going, I probably won't. But I have done Caroline's Comedy Hour, Comedy Central, and the National Lampoon Comedy Playoffs on Showtime, which were all white shows.

TONY: When you do shows like that are you selling out?

TONY: Fuck no! I look at it like this. When Jordan plays against Bird or Ewing he plays a different game, but he always gets his points. And I'm in this game to win. I make people laugh whether they be Black, white, Hispanic or Asian. As long as they understand English.

TONY: So can all the Black comics work both audiences? Like you do, Mr. Mac Daddy Supreme?

TONY: No, but can all of the comics you see on "Anglo" comedy shows rip it up at the Def Comedy Jam? So you see, it works both ways. After about a year I realized there were these unwritten rules:

- A white comic like Robin Williams or Barry Sobel who can rip in front of a Black or white audience is considered a comedy genius.
- A white comic who does really well in front of white crowds but dies like a roach under your foot in front of a Black crowd is consoled by the establishment as well as himself with the comments "they were not on your level" or "you were over their heads."
- A Black comic who rips in front of Black crowds but stinks up the room like smashed baby shit in white clubs is said not to be a "real comedian."
- Although, if you have a Black comedian say, like me, who can blow shit up in a white or Black room, the establishment will say, "Well, you ought to be able to make Black people laugh, you're Black."

TONY: I get the impression that you give Russell Simmons' new show all the credit for the big Black comedy explosion, right?

TONY: Wrong! Back in the early '80s you had a young Eddie Murphy on Saturday Night Live, then Robert Townsend, who not only entertained us and spotlighted new talent, but showed everyone it could be done on your own without big movie companies and millions of dollars behind you.

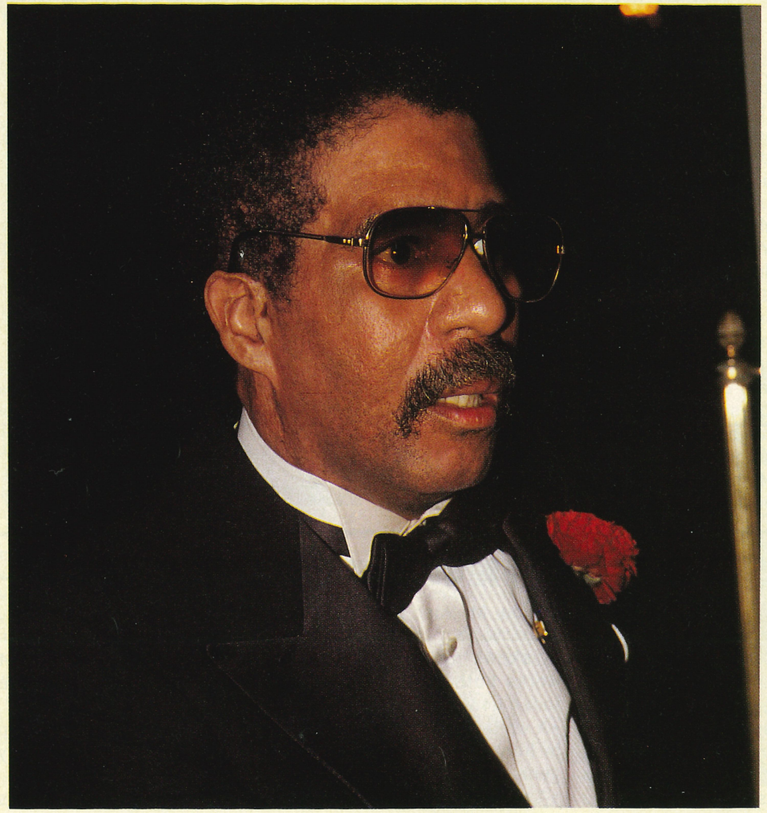
TONY: Man, you forgot about Spike Lee, Arsenio Hall, and shows like In Living Color, Fresh Prince and Martin.

TONY: Shit. everywhere you look a Black man is making us laugh. Right now in America the hottest forms of entertainment are Black comedy and country music. So if your name is Garth Brooks or Martin Lawrence, your shit is in the house!

REALITY CHECK

COMIC LEGEND RICHARD PRYOR STAGES A HALF-HEARTED COMEBACK

by Kevin L. Carter



Atlantic City—we in Jersey call it "Camden-by-the-Sea." It is a place where old fighters go to get one last paycheck. If they can breathe and stand upright, someone will pay for them to go in and get their heads beat in. Over the past couple of years, I've seen a lot of fights in Atlantic City's casinos. Some of them have been really good fights. Others have stunk up the Shore like the sea creatures that wash onto the beach during hurricanes. Some of the fights have been so bad that instead of booing, people in the crowds have just got up and left.

I've been to a lot of shows at the casinos, too. Some of the performers are a lot like those old fighters. And the audiences, sometimes drunk, sometimes agitated, always looking to get paid, but seldom succeeding, walk out. Those are the breaks, I guess. Unless they walk out on Richard Pryor. Then, something is wrong.

And something was definitely wrong at Donald Trump's Taj Mahal one Saturday night in January, 'cause that's what they did to Richard Pryor. And it wasn't just old people, or white people, or those you might have thought didn't understand. It was all kinds of people. And Pryor, in the midst of what may well be his last stand-up comedy tour, watched it happen. Helplessly.

See, without Richard Pryor, there would have been no Eddie Murphy, no Charlie Barnett, no Wayanses, no "In Living Color," no "Def Comedy Jam," none of that shit. There were other funny African-American men and women that came before him, and they influenced the hip-hop generation too. But nobody was better, or funnier, than Rich.

But here was this giant of comedy, this brother with the searing wit, doing a stand-up comedy act after so many years of being out of circulation—and he couldn't even stand up. The multiple sclerosis that he's had for the past few years has seriously weakened him. Rich ain't never been real big, but up there on stage, he looked like half a man. As he was helped to the middle of the stage, where a chair and a glass of water waited, a cascade of applause came down. "We love you, Rich," somebody shouted.

"I'm happy to be here, and glad to be alive," Pryor said. And you know he was. But then, as he started talking about his condition—"this MS shit really fucks with you!"—reality hit. This was Richard Pryor, alright. But it wasn't RICHARD PRYOR! You know, the one whose tapes you'd hide from your parents, the one who'd make you piss on yourself when you remembered something he said.

PRYOR TALKED FRANKLY ABOUT PROBLEMS HE HAS ENCOUNTERED IN HIS LIFE, BUT INSTEAD OF MS BEING A SOURCE OF MATERIAL, IT WAS THE THING THAT KEPT HIM FROM BEING TRULY HYSTERICAL

Like he always has, Pryor talked frankly about problems he has encountered in his life—drugs, women, heart attacks—but instead of MS being a source of material, it was the thing that kept him from being truly hysterical. He was funny, he made you laugh—a little—but the Richard Pryor who drove you crazy is gone forever.

It was painful seeing him up there. It made you want to cry. But then I remembered something he once said. When asked why he, an obviously diminished talent, continued to perform, he answered simply, "Because it's what I know how to do."

And when Richard Pryor was up there, stumbling through Mudbone and talking about how his dick no longer works and watching his children being born, he was doing what he knows how to do. And, more importantly, he was undergoing therapy. And if that's gonna be what keeps him alive, go ahead and let 'im do it. S

GARY BOAS/RETNA

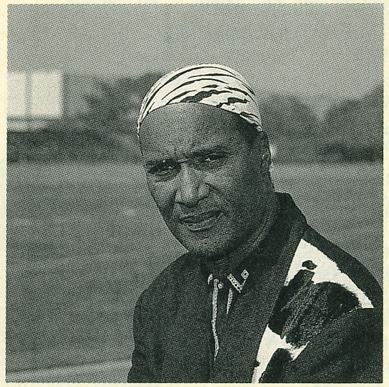
MISTA NIG'STA

PAUL MOONEY MAKES WHITE PEOPLE CRY LAUGHING

by Adario Strange

"And I dig niggers, niggers, niggers. . . That's right I love niggers! For I can only love that which is me. I love to see niggers make them plays, and shoot the shit. But there is one thing about niggers I do not love. Niggers are scared of revolution."
—THE LAST POETS

After pulling the postcard from his mailbox which bore the return address of Stepsun Records, he flipped it over to check the usual artwork or photography. A warm feeling of revulsion, shock, and then indignation slowly embraced him all at once as he examined the other side of the card, which boldly read: NIGGER, NIGGER, NIGGER, NIGGER, NIGGER, NIGGER. After thirty seconds of distilled anger, he flipped the postcard back over and caught, in small conservative print: SOMETIMES THE OVERUSE OF A WORD CAN DIMINISH ITS POWER.



This is only one of the complex and elusive elements that make up Paul Mooney's debut comedy album *Race* on Stepsun Music Entertainment. Your first impulse after listening to the material may be to chalk up *Race* as a throw back to the Richard Pryor (whose material Mooney wrote for many years) style of comedy. Not quite.

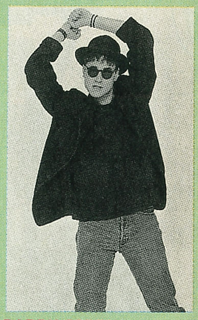
Mooney: "I've actually made white people at my shows start to cry, and then leave the club pissed off." That is the difference. Without turning someone who has ardently endeavored to be called "comedian" into some sort of societal icon, one still must make it a priority to sift through the laughter and examine the subtle display of controlled, intelligent and sophisticated rage that Paul Mooney has turned into his own personal artform.

There are two sides to this story involving the Louisiana-born, Oakland-raised runaway slave. One loudly says that album cover artwork depicting Mooney holding a starter's pistol in the air as three white men crouch prepared to "race" around a track, and skits like "Niggerstein," "1-900-Blame-A-Nigger," and "Nosey White People" are crudely designed to bully their way into the curiosities of an increasingly fickle public. And the other, a mellow voice, persuades that Mooney's repertoire is likened to medicine that at first bitters to the taste but later brings remedy with a smile and an understanding for its original purpose. Juxtaposed or not, the two perspectives both bear some amount of truth in reference to the style of the man who invented Homey The Clown.

Oddly enough, Paul Mooney's appearance comes off as "nigro" (sophisticated nig') rather than straight up nigga because of his usual suavé bola brim piece (on the album cover he sports a 'do rag), and his slick variety of updated '40s style suits. Despite what would seem like the perfect combination of look and substance, Mooney has pretty much remained an underground talent for most of his career. Mooney attributes this to his being pigeonholed as strictly a comedic writer and not a funnyman-in-action by the entertainment powers that be. Though that may be the primary reason for his relative obscurity, it could also be argued that Mooney's intense racially-sparked material has many scared to touch him. What he delivers is his honesty—focused through a Black prism that produces lazer-sharp criticism, introspection, and above all, reality-based humor. Whether or not you find his particular brand of comedy "funny," you will be forced to at least think seriously about what the man is saying.

But then again, who knows? When I asked him what a perfect Paul Mooney America would be, he replied: "One where I could have a big ass plantation, and have nothing but white slaves working in the fields! That shit would be great!" Ah ha! Hee, hee? S

DEF JAM ON WHITE BREAD

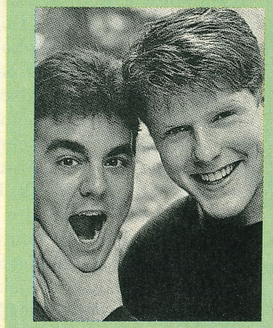


BARRY SOBEL

One night while on stage at a comedy club in New York, I'd just finished a bit I was doing about a Tribe Called Quest concert that I'd been to when a voice from the audience shouted, "You're gonna be the first white guy on Def Jam!" The voice belonged to Bob Sumner, talent VP for the "Def Comedy Jam." My response? "Russell Simmons is a pussy!" I was kidding of course, but then again, so was Sumner. In a sense, DCJ has become the major leagues of the Black comedy scene, but so far no white comedians have been allowed on the field.

In 1986, Barry Sobel threw down a few rhymes on a comedy stage, letting people know he wasn't "the Beastie Boys or Run DMC"—he was a stand-up comic that was down with hip-hop. Sobel became Black comedy's "token white guy"—the only white comic on the HBO special "Comedy Express" and the only white cast member of "227." Eddie Murphy once said that "Barry is the only white comedian who, when he does Black characters, you don't want to punch him in the face."

If Cypress Hill had decided to go into comedy, they might be known as Red Johnny and the Round Guy, a duo whose humor is blunted to the point. These two punks *stand-up* to give beat downs on a number of subjects. For politics, they threw in a little Cypress sample to express their disapproval of the pre-election political climate. "Here is something you must understand—we don't like Republicans!"



RED JOHNNY AND THE ROUND GUY

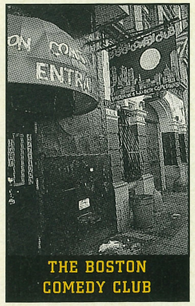
"It's not where ya from, it's where ya at!" says Red Johnny, paraphrasing Rakim. Right now, the duo is at MTV, where they are writing and taping sketches for a new show called "Comikase."

With hip-hop making the crossover to comedy, the question may be, "Who's catchin' wreck and who's fronting on the Vanilla Ice tip?" The answer? Only the Sandman knows for sure.

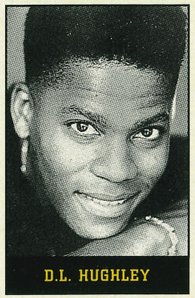
STU KAMENS

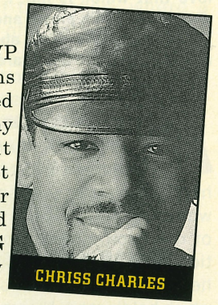
BEEPERS AND BLUNTS...

HIP-HOP COMEDY SPECIAL

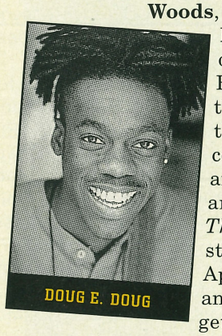


THE BOSTON COMEDY CLUB


D.L. HUGHLEY


CHRISS CHARLES

. . . those are the best words to describe the weekend crowd at **The Boston Comedy Club**, located on West 3rd Street in Greenwich Village, NYC. Boston is the hangout for **Wally Collins** (host of "Standup, Standupp" on Comedy Central), **Jay Mohr** (host of "Lip Service" on MTV), **Dave Chappelle**, **Tony Woods**, **Red Johnny & The Round Guy**, **Keith Robinson** and a whole slew of young, cutting-edge comics. Recently, Boston played host for the "In Living Color" auditions and the spot got turned out by Black comics from around the New York area. . . **Steve White** made appearances in **Spike Lee's** *Do The Right Thing* and *Malcolm X*. He has done stand-up work on Showtime At The Apollo, MTV, VHI, Comic Strip Live, and at clubs around the country. He's getting busy behind the camera too: he was a director's intern on **John Singleton's** film *Poetic Justice* and trained with Spike Lee on *Malcolm X*. . . **Doug E. Doug** is the star of a new television show called "Where I Live" which will debut on ABC this Spring. He plays a 17-year-old who becomes aware of the possibilities beyond his front stoop in Harlem. Also featured in the show is the comedian **Flex**, who is known as a dancer/choreographer for **Salt & Pepa**, **Queen Latifah** and **Slick Rick**. He got his start in comedy at the **Uptown Comedy Club**, and got the mad shout out on **A Tribe Called Quest's** "Hot Sex" when **Phife** said "You're full of jokes/ But yo, your name ain't Flex". . . **Chriss Charles** got his start at the **Comedy Act** in LA and was influenced by **Robin Harris**, who ran shit out there. His brand of hard-edged comedy can be seen on the Def Comedy Jam this season. . . Speaking of DCJ, everyone's favorite VP of talent, **Bob Sumner**, runs his own hot comedy spot called **The Fun House** on Thursday nights at the Peppermint Ballroom in Orange, NJ. Most of the stars on DCJ flex their material in this room. And as vice president of **SLBG Entertainment**—a subsidiary of Rush Communications—Bob is overseeing the careers of **Adele Givens**, **Bill Bellamy**, **Reggie Mc Fadden** and **Royale**. . . Meanwhile, you can catch that smooth one Bill Bellamy every day on MTV as host of the new r&b show "Jams". . . Look for **Joe Torry**, another hot young talent, on DCJ and in John Singleton's *Poetic Justice*. . . **Ricky Harris** is a dope young comic who showed he's firmly on the hip-hop tip in his sets on Def Comedy Jam . . . **Neal Brennan**, who wrote several articles for this special comedy section, recently completed a feature-length screenplay called "Crackerjacks," which he cowrote with **David Chappelle** and **Charlie Barnett**. . . Don't miss television's first stand-up comedy pay-per-view special, **Comic Jam Raw: The Big Showdown**, an "uncensored and raw" live presentation that will premiere on your screen in April. The special is hosted by **D.L. Hughley**—currently the host of BET's popular **Comic View** series—and co-hosted by **Simply Marvelous** and **Derrick Fox**. Comic Jam Raw showcases fifteen of the country's hottest young stand-up talents competing for a grand prize of $15,000 at a showdown in Anaheim, California. It was created by hip-hop impresario **Van Silk**, who put together "Rapmania" and "Sisters In The Name Of Rap" S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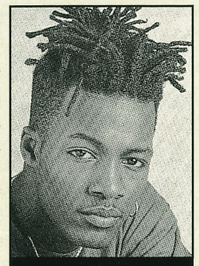
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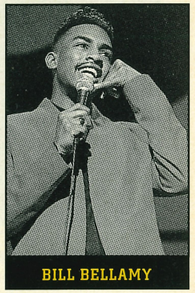
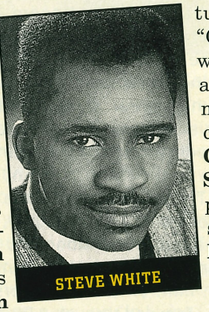

BILL BELLAMY

ADELE GIVENS


STEVE WHITE

RICKY HARRIS

JOE TORRY

BERNIE MAC

MAC, TORRY, GIVENS, HARRIS AND BELLAMY PHOTOS BY ANDRE E. SMITH

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CHRIS CUFFARO

MANY STYLES
THE FREESTYLE FELLOWSHIP

The Freestyle Fellowship—Acey Alone, Mikah 9, PEACE and Self Jupiter—have been kicking up dust on the West Coast underground scene for a few years now, both individually and in various groups. Perhaps best known for their intricate, off the head improvised flows at shows and their ability to freestyle, the FF finally bring their artistry to the world stage with their Island/4th & B'way debut, *Innercity Griots*.

THE SOURCE: How do you feel about other artists refering to you as "rapper's rappers?"
PEACE: Some people say that on the West Coast because LA hasn't had too many of what I guess they call "rapper's rappers." So when they look at us like that, I take it as a compliment, know what I'm sayin'?
Where do you see yourself fitting in the hip-hop puzzle?
PEACE: I see us in the doorway, but nobody's offered us seats to sit down and lounge in the hip-hop arena yet, so we kinda in the middle.
SELF JUPITER: I wanna be respected and get the best treatment, you know? All the little extras and shit, the money, the women. . .
Why didn't you use any of the material from your underground tape on this album?
Self Jupiter: We had a chance to do some other shit and we took it. We wanted to come new.
PEACE: We wanted to give people something different. The underground album is faster, they're all solos and everything is choppy, I mean mad vocal chops.
You take a lot of chances on the album with different types of music and styles. What do you want this album to do for the group?
SELF JUPITER: I'll tell you, this album doesn't have all of the shit that we are capable of doing on it. We toned a lot of stuff down because there was so much that we wanted to do with the jazz influences and the 808 type shit. We kinda got a little free on it and a little choppy, but it's not to the full extent of the Freestyle Fellowship. We tried to give up a little more than rap, we see it as a growing process.
PEACE: A lot of people outside of regular hip-hop are going to understand us from this album. So when they go back and get the old one, or the next one, they'll really be able to appreciate the skills that we got because each album is going to be different from the other.

AKWANZA

FLAMBOYANT !
HALF PINT

If you have the music video channel "The Box" in your home, you already know about Half Pint. Firmly entrenched in the Luke school of video sexploitation, this 20-year-old Miami native unleashes a trailer load of jiggling flesh over a catchy uptempo bass beat in his hit "One Leg Up"—one of the most heavily-requested videos in the country. Half Pint will be the first to admit that dudes call in for his video because of the girls, but hey, this is a business, right? And it worked, 'cause now you know his name and his record.

THE SOURCE: Talk about your beginnings in hip-hop.
HALF PINT: I was startin' my little DJ career in like the 7th grade. I came back to Miami [from New York] in like the end of '85. And goin' into '86, I just started doin' a lot more DJing, like playin' with the records and learnin' a little bit more about it. In the beginning of '87, I hooked up with Beat Master Clay D, who is a producer now. Magic Mike was with me then—we was called the "Boot the Booty Crew." It was really like the "Get Funky Crew." That was when I came out with a song called "Stump and Grind," that was my first single.
You were part of the same group as Magic Mike?

Yeah, see Magic Mike used to DJ for me. So all of us came from the same group—Beat Master Clay D, DJ Magic Mike, MC Madness. Everybody came from the same crew and we separated when it got to the point to where we had some problems with the label.
What's the concept behind the song and video "One Leg Up"?
Before I came out with "One Leg Up," I came out with a song called "Big Booty Girls"—that did real good too. When I was throwin' my song "Big Booty Girls" in the night clubs, they started doin' a dance where they hold their leg up in the air. So I thought, man, that would be nice, to combine the dance that they doin' with the song. So I tried it.
People like the video because of the females that are in it—that's almost like a trend in videos now.
I always been talking about girls—big booty girls, girls this, girls that. This new album is called *Watch Me Grow* and it's talkin' about girls and how I grew up. When I was younger, I just always been around girls. I never been the gangster type person. I was the flamboyant type, you know, that always loved the party scenery. But I live on the edge, you know?
What do you mean by "the edge"?
The edge is like when you never stop. It's like when you're in motion and then you stop, you feel like you gotta keep goin' to accomplish more and more. It's like, by all means necessary. I feel that in everything that they do, everyone must do their best. I live in a part of town where you never know what can happen. You stop at a stop light and you bound to get jacked for your jewelry. You always gotta be keen, you gotta be very much on top of yourself. The edge is a real fast and dangerous life.

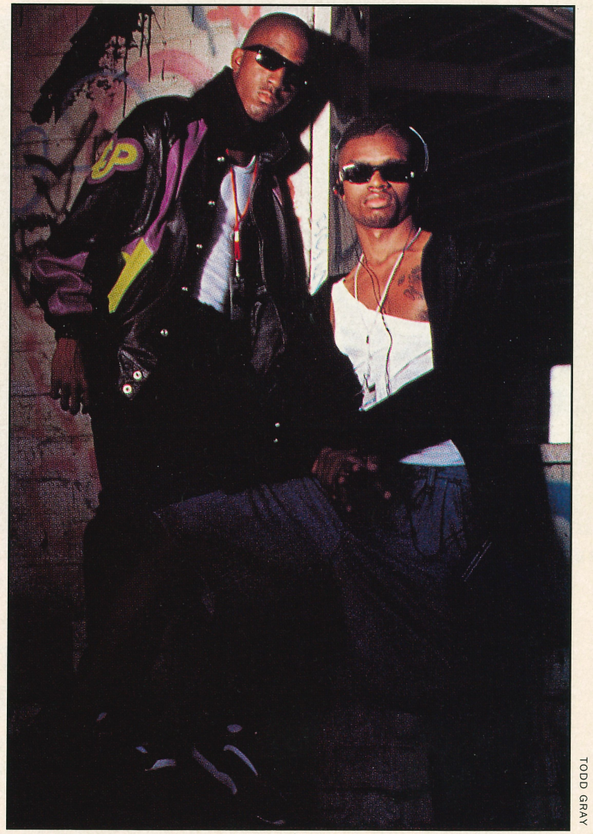
JON SHECTER

ZOOMA-ZOOM
WRECKX-N-EFFECT

It's nine tray and Wreckx-N-Effect are back on the screen with "Rump Shaker," the first single from their second LP entitled *Hard or Smooth*, and all I'm catchin' is shrapnel to da body from the bomb they dropped on us. After a falling out with Motown Records and the tragic loss of group member Brandon Mitchell, Wreckx still managed to launch their sophomore album. This time they're on Future/MCA Records (headed by Teddy Riley) and have already reached platinum plus with the first single. Wreckx are shaking rumps from coast to coast and with the king of new jack swing, Teddy Riley helping them pump beats, heads will be bobbing and knees bending.

THE SOURCE: How does this album compare to the last one?
A-PLUS: I think our mental was pretty much the same, as far as the chemistry that we put into the album, but the sound is definitely more mature.
Where did the concept for "Rump Shaker" come from?
Teddy came up with the concept, but me and Markell didn't wanna come out with no "shake ya butt" shit. Teddy was the one who had a strong feeling about the single. He said if we take it this way, we should slam. It was a big fight throughout the making of the whole album, 'cause Ted was making sure we leaned to both sides. Me and Markell was in favor of what we like—strictly hard shit.
What makes you different from other groups that are out?
One thing is that we have Teddy working with us as far as production goes. I think everyone knows his sound, it's unique. And just having him work with you alone is enough to really distinguish you from everybody else. Outside of the the whole style with Wreckx-N-Effect I see myself as a writer and I just try to focus on everything that's going on as far as everybody that's out—what they doin'— you know, I know a lot of rappers and I like a lot of rappers, but I like them for certain reasons, so whatever they're missing, I try to capitalize on.
Do you think your sound has affected the rap or R&B communities?
I think it sprung a lot of R&B as far as the new jack sound is concerned. As far as rap artists go, I think the sound came across and was successful in its message to the people, but other rappers didn't really take to it. A year or so back, you would hear a lot of rappers dissin' the sound and shit, saying new jack is wack. We had a whole lot of other rappers saying shit like, "You can new jack swiiing on my nuts." And them Tribe niggas, "Strictly hardcore tracks not a new jack swing." All we really had was a chance to express that "New Jack Swing" song and it ran for like two muthafuckin' years almost. So people really just took that and ran with it, as if that was all we had. So, that's why we named this album *Hard or Smooth*, ya know. So we could give the people what they want and let muthafuckas out there know: like whoever thinks the new jack swing shit is wack and all of that, we can get with they type shit and beat them at it.

J-BOOM



TODD GRAY

OUT OF E

REDMAN, K-SOLO, PARRISH AND ERICK OF EPMD, SKOOB AND DRAYZ OF DAS EFX IN SEPTEMBER '92—THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM

AT THE PEAK OF THEIR FAME, RAP SUPERSTARS EPMD CALL IT QUITS. WAS THE APPARENT UNITY OF THE HIT SQUAD ACTUALLY A BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER?

EPMD departed for personal reasons," says Parrish Smith as he steers his truck through the back roads of Long Island. "We had a major blow-out in the cockpit between Erick and I that wouldn't have allowed me to be in there at 115%, like I had always been with EPMD."

The break-up of EPMD has stunned the Hip-Hop Nation, leaving many wondering how this group could disintegrate in the midst of its most successful and influential year. In the historically unstable world of rap music, Erick Sermon and Parrish Smith seemed as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar. As businessmen they set an example by taking control of their own careers. As artists they not only made hit records but they consistently discovered, developed and introduced new and exciting talent to the world. With the help of K-Solo, Das EFX and Redman, the Hit Squad was responsible for combined sales of over three million albums and singles during 1992. And even though they were in their fifth year in the business, EPMD still managed to be competitive, earning their fourth consecutive gold album and their first-ever gold single. And there was more to come; a white duo called the Knuckle Heads and a raw, ground-breaking female MC named Hurricane G were already waiting on deck. During the summer of '92 it looked like the Hit Squad had just begun, yet by the time they filmed the video for "Headbanger," it was all coming apart at the seams.

Parrish Smith takes no pleasure in discussing the events that led to EPMD's sudden and unexpected break-up. EPMD represents a significant chapter of his life, one that he does not want to see tarnished by a media battle. "The problem that we are dealing with is something that only he and I can understand," says Parrish. "People speculate, but they'll never know the real on how me and E worked . . . You've gotta understand we been

BY REGINALD C. DENNIS

CHI MODU

out here five, six years swingin' at it, tryin' to build it. We've brought a lot of artists in and we've made a lot of contributions to rap. I just don't want to get in the papers and focus on negative stuff. The fans don't need to hear it." While ending the group was a difficult decision to make, Parrish feels that it was his only option. "We had a major situation. Big enough for EPMD to take a seat."

While reports alluding to dissent within the Hit Squad have recently surfaced—allegations that include withheld monies, stolen rhymes and song concepts, false production credits and physical threats—many feel that the event resulting in EPMD's "major situation" came as a result of an incident which placed the lives of Parrish Smith and his family in danger. While he declines to give details of who was involved and what their motives might have been (it is believed to have come from within the Hit Squad), Parrish Smith does acknowledge that late last summer, right before the Hit Squad Tour was to begin, a group of armed men broke into his Long Island home intending to do him some physical harm. While Parrish was not home at the time and no harm came to his family, the incident does raise some serious questions as to whether this incident was an unprovoked attack or payback for some past transgression.

K-Solo, who has severed his ties with Parrish Smith and has officially left the Hit Squad because of "business problems," was not surprised that Parrish would be the subject of a physical assault. "Niggas was tired of one man controllin' everything," he says. According to K-Solo, in addition to some questionable business practices, Parrish Smith—who has been described by some as a cross between Michael Milken and Russell Simmons—has stepped on a lot of toes and alienated a lot of people over the years. "EPMD broke up, but you have to look at [the situation] before they broke up. Who was runnin' over the line before who? Why was *he* the target?"

Some industry insiders suggest that as far as the business arrangements were concerned, things weren't on the same level between Erick and Parrish. Shuma Management, the company that represents the Hit Squad, is not owned 50/50 by Erick Sermon and Parrish Smith, as was commonly believed. Shuma belongs to Parrish Smith, and as the sole owner of Shuma Management, Parrish was entitled to a slightly larger slice of the Hit Squad pie. For example, as equal partners in a company called GMC (Generating Mad Cash) Erick and Parrish collected money as the executive producers of the Das EFX album. But as the manager of both Das EFX and Erick Sermon, Parrish got an extra share. The same arrangement worked with K-Solo, Redman and EPMD. As the Hit Squad's management entity, Parrish received a percentage of all Hit Squad projects, whether he worked on them or not.

K-Solo admits that while he has serious problems with Parrish for not producing his second album (the commercially disappointing *Time's Up*) and allegedly putting his career "on the back burner," his decision to leave was based on the fact that he did not want to bring the acts *he* was developing through Shuma Management. "Niggas is mad at me 'cause I'm tryin' to do my shit and I don't wanna bring it through them," he explains. "I gotta bring my shit to you? You got to get some?"

Parrish Smith, who denies all reports that he has taken advantage of any of his artists, is quick to point out that the only people saying negative things about him are probably, "the people who lost out—the people who couldn't wait and wanted to do things their way." As for those who have problems with his corporate structure, he recalls that it was he who, "stood up to four or five 'o clock in the morning taking care of mad business and settin' up world tours while certain people was just hangin' out on some 'I'm large' shit. While everybody was thinking that it was all about music, rhyming, girls and money, I was dealing with taxes and corporate Manhattan."

"WHILE EVERYBODY WAS THINKING THAT IT WAS ALL ABOUT MUSIC, RHYMING, GIRLS AND MONEY, I WAS DEALING WITH TAXES & CORPORATE MANHATTAN"
—PARRISH SMITH

Parrish also explains that it was because of his concerns regarding the well being of his artists that he didn't break up EPMD the minute he discovered who was behind the break-in at his home. He went ahead with the video for "Headbanger," even though he knew it was to be the groups swan song. He went ahead with the Hit Squad Tour because to not do so would have meant that K-Solo, Redman and Das EFX wouldn't have gotten the opportunity to go out on the road to support their albums. He also didn't want to disappoint all the EPMD fans who were expecting to see them perform live. "For me to flip means that everybody's shit would have been in jeopardy," he says of his decision to delay his inevitable retaliation. "I couldn't just pull shit down, a lot of guys would have lost. There would have been no Hit Squad Tour. No Shuma, no nothing. And a tremendous amount of fans would have lost. I had to sit in the pocket and wait until we did the 'Tonight Show' with Jay Leno. Then I got home and set it off."

Parrish refuses to discuss the actions he took, nor will he confirm or deny the rumors that he had numerous people, including Erick Sermon, arrested for conspiring against him. "People believe what they want to believe," he says in reference to the rumors. "For me to dwell on that would be like me steppin' back into that EPMD situation and speakin' for Erick, somethin' I can't do. That's on E. I know where my seat is and I wouldn't make no drastic moves or put a major group on the line unless it was necessary. It was my call, I could have stayed and been in a group that had problems, but EPMD was just not that kind of group. Erick and I have never, ever, as far as I was concerned, had problems. This was the first problem that we was faced with, and I understand exactly why everything went down. We started out as kids, now it's time for us to grow up. The big-

ger the group gets the bigger the responsibility. The more responsibility, the more people to watch, and the shit happens." But again he points out that what went down between him and Erick is not what people should focus on. "What is important," he says, "is that Erick take his 50% and make just as big of a contribution to the underground [as I am]. If he's steppin off the way I'm steppin' off, regardless of what's goin' on between EPMD and regardless of what he's got to handle, he'll get busy. He knows the industry. Now he's really got to focus and execute that shit."

One person who holds vital pieces to this puzzle, Erick Sermon, is the only member of the Hit Squad who declined to be interviewed for this piece. Sources close to him describe him as bitter and saddened by the entire turn of events. They also say that he is being unfairly blamed for a situation he had nothing to do with. He is currently working on a solo project and will not make any comments until that task is completed.

While chances for any kind of reconciliation look grim at this point, Russell Simmons, owner of Def Jam Records, is optimistic about the prospect of future EPMD albums. "They've been friends for a long time," he explains. "I'm sure that once they sit down in a room and talk, they will be able to work things out and get back together. Erick told me that in his heart, he still considers himself to be a part of EPMD."

Whatever the case, no one seems to be waiting around for a reunion. All members of the Hit Squad, both past and present, are taking the necessary steps to ensure that their careers stay on course.

Das EFX will be starting work on their new album shortly. They don't think that recent events will have that much affect on them. "There is a difference between EPMD and Das EFX," Skoob explains. "If you can see it, then that will make it easier to go on. If you get that confused, then everything will be up in smoke." Drayz feels that they will "just have to dig a little bit deeper" into themselves in order to come strong in '93.

Even though he is still managed by Shuma, Redman maintains close ties to both K-Solo and Erick Sermon. While he is upset that things happened when it was his turn to shine, he insists that "Reggie Noble is doin' his own thing." His future plans include beginning work on the next Redman album, as well as making sure that the Hurricane G project is tight. "It's fucked up that everything had to go down as soon as I came out," he laments. "But niggas gotta do what they gotta do. Things happen for a reason. The only thing I can do is stay real. I'ma still do my thing and do that funk shit."

In addition to leaving the Hit Squad, K-Solo has been released from his commitment to Parrish Smith's Slow Flow Productions. While saddened by the way things turned out, he has no regrets. "I learned a lot about this business from P," he says. K-Solo plans to get more involved on the business side of things. He has started his own management company and will bring out new talent. He has high hopes for an artist named Black Caesar. And as for his own rap career, he has already begun developing concepts for his next album. He is not sure whether it will be on Atlantic Records, but he is reportedly very close to a commitment that would have Dr. Dre behind the production board.

Erick Sermon has been keeping busy in the studio, both producing and rhyming. The first single from the *Who's The Man* soundtrack on Uptown/MCA is scheduled to be an Erick Sermon solo cut. And in addition to his solo album on Def Jam, he has been doing a lot of production work for other groups. He spent some time in Atlanta laying down the funk for a new Dallas Austin/Rowdy Records project called Illegal. Look for him to produce the new Redman album as well as finishing Hurricane G's project.

With four gold albums and a six-year run to his credit, Parrish Smith has decided to put the mic down and make the transition from performer to record company owner. Having signed a multi-million dollar production and distribution deal with RCA/BMG, Parrish plans to continue to make an impact on underground rap. The goal of PMD Records will be to build, "four or five more EPMD's." He still represents the Hit Squad through Shuma Management and he has just signed the Knuckle Heads to East West Records. While he says that he is not mad at Erick Sermon for what has happened between them—"E did what he had to do"—he has no plans for any future EPMD albums (he claims to have already walked away from a one million dollar offer). Nor does Parrish have any desire for a solo career, a move he considers "selfish and playing yourself, like you've got something to prove."

As to the void that EPMD will undoubtedly leave in the underground, Skoob of Das EFX sums it up perfectly. "The music will be missed," he reflects. "But you have to deal with it. Times change and EPMD had to grow. The Hit Squad is still here. It's not like we fell apart, we're just growing. And it's because we're growing on the business tip that the fans can't see it. It's just a tangled web. That's the music business, a tangled web."

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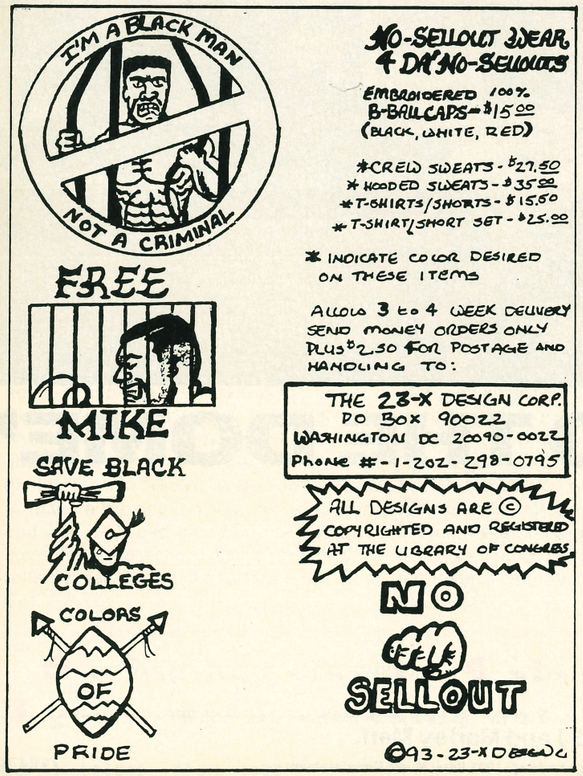

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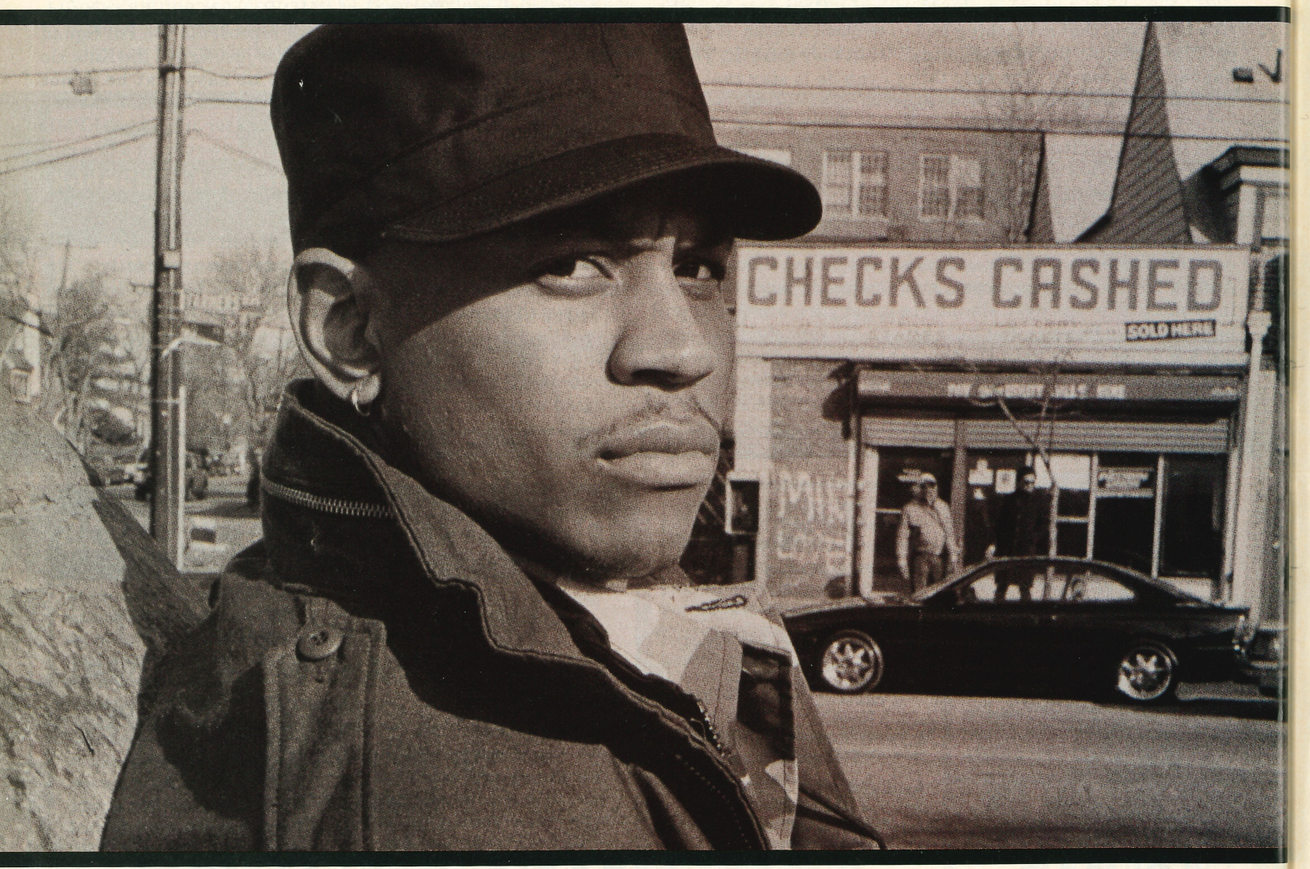

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LL COOL J

Produced by LL Cool J and Marley Marl.

Def Jam recordings

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COLUMBIA

RECORD REPORT

ALBUMS

APACHE

Apache
Tommy Boy
Production: various

The Flavor Unit has snuffed us in the grill with the hardcore rhymes from Naughty By Nature, the "trio from E.O." (East Orange, NJ). This year, the Flavor squad gives us a slamming debut from one of "Chilltown's" (Jersey City) best.

Apache, the man who gave light to the "Gangsta Bitch," and got busy on Naughty's "1, 2, 3," gets things started right off the bat. After the intro track, he slides into "Tonto," a braggadocio type joint where he flips rhymes about hittin' skinz with his main man Tonto (who most brothers around my way refer to as "Jimmy"). With its mellow track, the song sounds like a smoothed-out "Talk Like Sex." Another stand out is the innovative "Do Fa Self," where Apache flips rhymes with a nine-year-old kid about the dangers of livin' large by foul means.

While a good portion of this album deals with sex and could be seen as disrespectful to women, Apache is more than willing to make amends. His duet with Nikki D, "Who Freaked Who," is sure to be a favorite as the two exchange colorful rhymes similar to Ice Cube's and Yo-Yo's "It's A Man's World." And on "Make Money" he turns the tables, appealing for women to juice brothers for all they've got: "Use your imagination, why think small?/Instead of taking half, fuck it/Why not take it all?"

Production-wise, the album thrills, with some of hip-hop's finest taking control. Diamond drops by and digs in his vast supply of crates and comes up with plenty of dust on his fingers and a little slime under his fingernails. "Git Ya Weight Up" is sure to make a hip-hop junkie's hair stand on end with its hyped drumtrack and soulful horns. Not to be outdone, the Large Professor rolls out fat, island-tinged flavor on "Hey Girl."

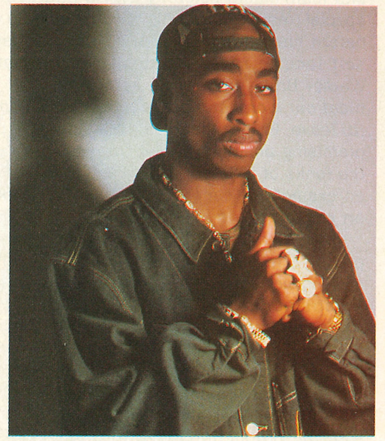
KRISTINE LAESEN

This album's diverse musical nature will make it a welcome addition to many collections. Apache is raw enough to appeal to underground heads, without closing the door on the casual, R&B oriented hip-hop consumer. THE DERELICT TODD B.

2 PAC

Strictly 4 My N.I.G.G.A.Z
Interscope
Production: various

Haunting psychedelic R&B grooves with eerie vocal and synth effects play off raging Bomb Squad style gangsta shit on this talented Oaktown rapper's second LP. If you've seen him on the stage, on the big screen or just kickin' it in person at a club, you know that 2 Pac is a brother who lives the hardcore life 24/7. A combination of '60s Black political thought and '90s urban reality, 2 Pac is not afraid to speak his mind. And while some may consider his anti-cop tirades and wild-eyed preaching unnerving, he at least gives listeners a much needed break from smoking Phillies and bustin' other brothers in the head.

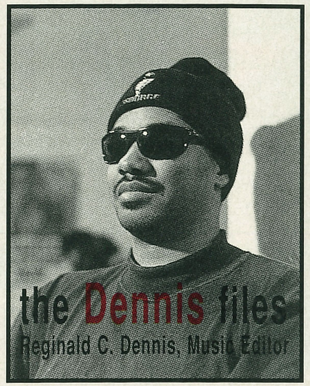


JEFFERY NEWBURY

He is at his best on cuts like "Keep Ya Head Up," a smooth but hardcore R&B track that offers a mental solution to today's hard times and "Pappa's Song," where he balances the gangsta tendencies of street life with insightful revelations on what's missing in the lives of many of today's youth. He ironically sounds like his enemy Dan Quayle, who he often disses, when he says: "Things I wouldn't

5 a hip-hop classic 4 slammin'—definite satisfaction
3 good, worth checking out 2 needs help 1 totally wack

While I was shocked to hear that **Warner Bros.** released **Ice-T** from his recording contract, I would be lying if I said that it came as a total surprise to me. It's not like we didn't see this coming. After all, Ice-T had promised that *Home Invasion* would be no different than his previous rap albums, so if he gave in to the pressure and made a soft, safe album he would have been ass-out. If Warner Bros. had agreed to put the album out, then it would have meant that all that yang that **Time Warner** kicked last summer about not bowing to special interest groups and protecting Ice-T's right to free speech was true and I would owe Ice-T and Time Warner an apology. But that wasn't the case. By refusing to put out *Home Invasion*, Warner Bros. showed how shallow their commitment to rap is. In light of this, I wonder If Ice-T still thinks that pulling "Cop Killer" was a good idea (I'm sure **Ecstacy**, **Tupac**, **Scarface**, **James Smith**, **DJ Pooh** and millions of others feel that song has some legitimate social merit).



Even though the controversy sparked album sales to well over 500,000 units and made **Body Count** a household name, Ice-T was forced to pay a tremendous price. In addition to providing Time Warner with a convenient way out of the situation, his policy of corporate appeasement forced him to compromise his artistic integrity as well as seriously jeopardizing his ticket to walk through hip-hop's underground. When Time Warner needed him to, Ice-T went far beyond the call of duty to be accommodating. But when it became time for Warner Bros. to lend him that same support, they simply could not or would not do it.

I used to think that Ice-T's five gold albums, and multi-media celebrity status afforded him special treatment over his fellow rappers. I was wrong. Just weeks before his album was scheduled to be released, he found himself face to face with the same ultimatum that every other Warner Bros. rapper was subjected to. *If your product does not meet our moral standards you have two options: (a) change it, or (b) leave.* Rather than allow himself to be put in yet another compromising position, he did the right thing and left. He now joins the ranks of artists like **Kool G Rap & DJ Polo** and **Paris**, who set an example by choosing to leave the label rather than see their art censored.

By the time you read this, Priority Records will have announced plans to release Ice-T's album as he intended. Now that the slate is clean, all that remains for Ice is to give the Hip-Hop Nation a satisfactory explanation of what went down last summer. I think we deserve it.

A lot of people are in the studio tightening up their Spring and Summer releases. I got a chance to chill with the **Beatnuts** as they were mixing down their self-titled EP. You should all be familiar with the production skills of these guys, as they have worked their magic on the likes of **Chi Ali**, **Common Sense**, **Pete Nice** and **Kurious**, but are you ready for them on the mic? These guys are some straight up negative, non-role model types, who are only out to "F*ck, Drink Beer and Smoke Some Sh*t." True, they don't promote much in the way of social responsibility, but it sure sounds good in the car. Check for the EP in about a month . . . • **Da Youngsta's** are back in the studio working on a follow up LP for East West. Now, I'll admit that I wasn't too excited the first time around, but I am definitely impressed by their new material. **Taji**, **Tarik** and **Qu'ran** are improving with age and their producers, **Pete Rock & CL Smooth**, **Marley Marl**, **Louie Louie** and **Naughty By Nature** are definitely guiding them in the right direction. Word has it that producers are lining up around the block to work with these kids . . .• **Gang Starr** have also been spending a lot of time in the studio. **Guru** is currently working on *Jazzmataz*, a jazz/rap collaboration that will pair him with the likes of **Roy Ayers**, **MC Solaar**, **Branford Marsalis**, **N'Dea Davenport** and **Ronnie Jordan**. A documentary is also being filmed about the project. And as soon as **DJ Premier** is done with **KRS-One**'s new LP, both he and Guru will complete work on this summer's Gang Starr album . . .• **Kool Keith** a.k.a. **Rhythm X** is hard at work on his solo LP. I've heard most of his *Pound Ov K-OS* demo and it is as bugged-out as you would expect. The late-breaking word at press time: **Ultramagnetic** has signed a deal with **Wild Pitch**, and the Bronx Bombers will be back on the market this year!. . . • Expect a new **Jungle Brothers** LP sometime between this spring and the summer of 1998 . . .• The video for "Rat Bastard" reveals that if he wasn't a rapper, **Pete Nice** would have made his mark as either an actor or a batting coach . . .• **Nice & Smooth** are working on a new album. They just did a duet with **House Of Pain** . . .• If small print hurts your eyes, and you couldn't sit through the three and a half hour movie, check out "Malcolm X Like A Father To Me" by **MC Nubian** and **DJ Ricochet** (Stack A Dollar Productions) it gives you the facts in under five minutes . . .• Chicago's **Black AG** has been signed to Conquest Records. Look for an LP in the near future . . .• With career sales well over the 200,000 unit mark, Detroit's unholy terror, **Esham**, is about to make a move for national attention. His latest LP's *Judgement Day* Vols. 1 & 2 (Reel Life Productions) have been blowing out of the box with virtually no promotion. Could "Acid Rap" be the next big thing? . . .• **MC Finsta** is catching a little wreck in NYC with his Brooklyn delivery and his underground single, "Finsta Baby" (Cracd Records. 212-465-3107). I think he's got a lot of potential . . .• **DJ Pooh** has just negotiated a production and label deal with Mercury Records. Look for a lot of exciting releases on Da Bomb Records . . .• If you thought that the **EPMD** break up was shocking, wait until you hear who else has just split up—it must be "niggas flippin'" season . . . • I saw the trailer for ***Who's The Man***, the movie starring **Dr. Dre** and **Ed Lover**. If the entire movie is as funny as what I saw, they may have a hit on their hands . . .

do to see a piece of family unity."

At times his vocals and production sound so much like Ice Cube that you might find yourself checking the label. On "Point The Finga" you'd almost swear it was The Predator himself dropping the "Boom, boom, boom/On ya black azz" chorus. The raw "5 Deadly Venomz" features a pounding rhythm track, sharp rhymes, a dancehall twist and cameos by The Flavor Unit's favorite sons, Treach and Apache, while "Streets R Death Row" boasts rugged basslines, upbeat piano and horn loops and too many right rhymes to mention.

Production wise, 2Pac has taken a big step, as the diverse arrangements of Bobcat, Big D, Stretch and Special Ed pack more of a consistent punch than they did on last year's *2Pacalypse Now* debut. And while he delivers a very tight and even LP this time around and will no doubt receive props for his efforts, he still fails to live up to the promise he displayed on Digital Underground's '91 single, "Same Song."

ERIC BERMAN

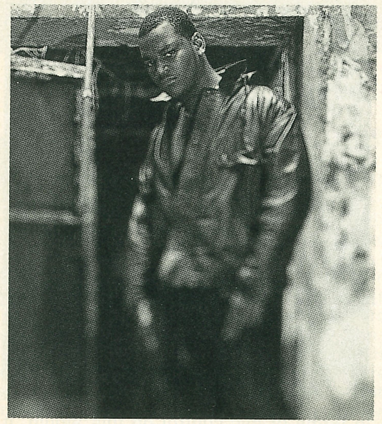
TRAGEDY

Saga Of A Hoodlum

A&M

Production: various

Stomping into the new year with Timberland treads, Tragedy (also known as the Intelligent Hoodlum) catches wreck and represents on his sophomore LP. With this album the "live motivator" does his best to break outta the beginner's basement



and into the penthouse of rap's elite.

While his 1990 debut blew up on the down low, the most memorable cuts on that LP, "Back to Life" and "Arrest the President" came from such different angles that listeners were left like Q-tip, wondering, "Where ya at?" While "Back to Life" was a laid-back tale of a hip-hop childhood (set to a Soul II Soul sample), "Arrest the President" was a rapid fire political message similar in style to Paris or Public Enemy. In '93, Tragedy attempts to blend the Intelligent side and the Hoodlum side with top-notch production by Marley Marl and lesser known producers such as Epitome of Scratch, K-Def, and Kool-T.

The first side sports ill-type flavor throughout—especially the "They Reminisce Over You" flavored "Grand Groove," which reuses the funky piano jingle of Biz Markie's "Make the Music" spread over a bare bones guitar and drumbeat. Other highlights are "Shalom A Leck," (a kinda "Boom Shalock Lock Boom" type thang) and "Funk Mode," (tsk-tsk-tsk—the fourth song to use the guitar chord sample found on De La Soul's "Bitties...," Supercat's "Ghetto Red Hot," and Brand Nubian's "Punks Jump Up") as well as the short, Pete Rock-type, funky intros thrown in for added flavor.

One of the best tracks, the hardcore "Pass the Tech," features Tragedy and Havock from Mobb Deep creating "drama for your muthafuckin' mama." Cuts like this are sure to appeal to "bad boulevard boys from the projects" in the same way that Dr. Dre and Redman have. But this same audience may skip past Tragedy's political tracks, like "Rebel to Amerikkka" and "Role Model," where he sacrifices head-nodding magnetism for moral blase blah. While I understand that life ain't all hoochies, coochies, buddha, and blunts, if the track doesn't motivate, the message doesn't stand a chance. Overall, Tragedy's "Fuck what you heard and act like you know!" attitude, coupled with his funk production, is sure to provide suitable listening pleasure for young rogues and troublemakers everywhere. SHORTIE

KID ROCK

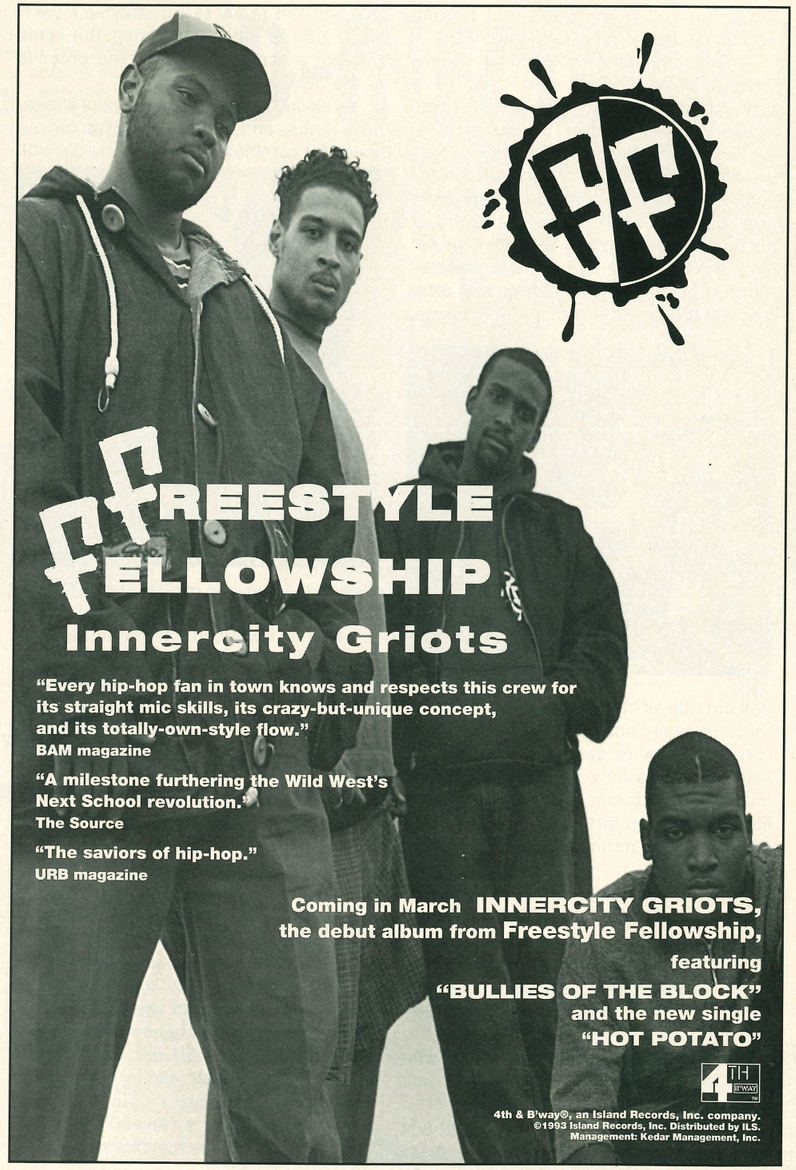
The Polyfuze Method

Continuum Records

Production: artist, Mike Clark, D-Square

This Detroit native made a little noise a couple of years back with a very humorous LP on Jive called *Grits Sandwiches For Breakfast*. Selling over 100,000 units, his macked-out white boy flavor started a buzz in the Mid-West, and before long he was touring the country with the likes of Ice Cube and Too Short. But due to a lack of label support Kid Rock quickly faded into rap oblivion.

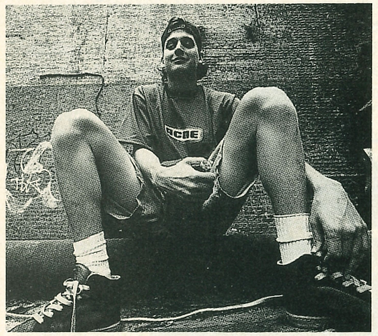
Now the self-proclaimed "pimp of the nation" is back with a new album filled with boasts, sex rhymes, drug abuse and heavy metal riffs. But there is something missing this time out—namely the funk. Last time out, Kid Rock had funk tracks hooked up by Too Short, D-Nice and Chuck Nice (no relation), and no matter what you thought of his rhyming ability you could



at least get into the music. This time however, the production work is a nightmarish combination of the hollow electronic beats that you would find on a 1985 Too Short tape, layered with the loud guitar work of a suburban, junior high heavy metal band.

If you can imagine the Beastie Boys without fat tracks then you have a clear idea of what this record sounds like: a lot of screaming and whining. And during those rare occasions when he does manage to come correct with hip-hop beats, he sounds so much like MCA and Ad Rock that you would think that he had access to their unreleased material.

On the uptempo and dusted-out "Killing Brain Cells" he screams: "Kid Rock/That's right, you know I'm back ho/From the dead, where I had to lay low/Seems strange but I ain't change nothin', G/Pot smokin'/Beer drinkin' motherfucker, that's me." Last summer's "Back From The Dead" still kicks and is a perfect example of the Kid at his best, while "Trippin' With Dick Vitale" is a collection of humorous, half-completed thoughts over a sparse 808 track that *could* pump in the jeep if given half the chance.



But outside of these few brief moments there is really not much worth checking for. Kid Rock is definitely letting his skills go to waste by not building a strong musical foundation. This record sounds like it has been sitting on a shelf since 1986 and that definitely won't do in '93.

REGINALD C. DENNIS

MADKAP

Look Ma Dukes, No Hands
Loud/RCA
Production: Broadway

There are many groups nationwide who are bucking the hip-hop stereotypes of their region—be they gangsta or bass sound—and beginning to produce quality music without a zip code. MadKap is one of many groups (Freestyle Fellowship, Pharcyde, etc.) who are not constrained by location and believe in the importance of the rhyme and a "many styles, many styles" approach in creating dope music.

On their debut LP, MadKap (Coke, Dr. Soose, and Motif) catch a definite "rhyming is fundamental" vibe. Along with their producer Broadway, they create swingy, semi-jazzy tracks sprinkled with live instrumentation. On the standout, "Proof Is In The Puddin'," a jazzy horn soars over a head-nodding, soul-clapping swing beat as MadKap represent for their crew. "Now it's '92 and I'm ready to rip shit/So I can't slip/I gots to watch my footing/But come and get a scoop cuz troop/The proof is in the pudding."

As album topics cover tales about khakis, hoes, trips, and buddha, MadKap have a knack for combining appealing tracks with

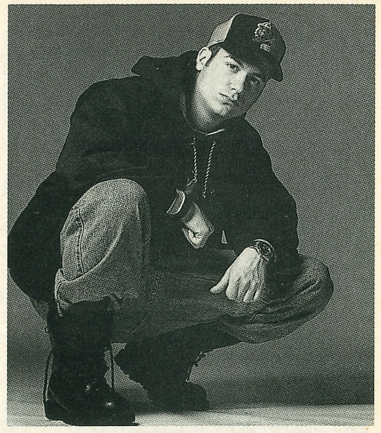
their own somewhat insane and whimsical sensibilities. However, there is a drawback to being so "madcap." Sometimes these kids don't know when to stop. They enjoy rhyming so much that too many of the songs are just too long. Next time they should keep both hands on the controls instead of none.

BRETT JOHNSON

ALI DEE

Bring It On
EMI
Production: artist

After bombing with his first attempt at being an artist (he was a member of The Next School) Ali Dee was drafted by Hank Shocklee to join the Bomb Squad production team, where he worked on projects by Kid Panic, YBT and most notably the *Juice* soundtrack, adding a few touches to Big Daddy Kane's "'Nuff Respect" and Eric B & Rakim's "Know The Ledge." And while he has made some strong advances



in terms of mic control on this album, it is safe to say that Ali Dee does his best work behind the production console and not on the steel.

His rhymes are delivered with enthusiasm and usually come hard and on time, but there is something missing. Boasting that he is the baddest MF in the world, it's hard to take him seriously when he puts out records like "Hit 'Em In Da Head (With A Brick)," which is early Beasties laughable at best.

The production, however, is all that—fun and packed with crisp, upbeat basslines, clear drum and piano tracks, and well-picked samples. The first video and single off the LP, "Who's The Flava," turns a sample of Curtis Mayfield's '68 hit "Bring It On" into a euphoric party anthem with Old School sensibility. "Got 2 B Real" showcases a blistering sax solo, and "Bring It On," features a cameo by Kool G Rap, who spices up the cut, only to see Ali's rhymes fall short.

Dee is cool when he is himself on the mic. It is when he panders to the underground and tries to come off hardcore that he takes a fall.

ERIC BERMAN

MONIE LOVE

In A Word Or 2
Warner Bros.
Production: artist, Marley Marl, Prince and Aaron Lyles

The club success of "Monie In The Middle" and "It's A Shame" led many to believe that the Monie Love that everyone had sweated on Queen Latifah's "Ladies First" was slippin'. Often sounding better on other R&B artists remixes than on her own debut LP and opting to cater to clubs instead of the street, it looked like Monie Love was wearing out her American welcome, as far as the underground was concerned.

With her sophomore attempt Monie

HIP-HOP ALTERNATIVES

CARON WHEELER

Beach Of The War Goddess
Chrysalis/EMI

After turning it out for Soul II Soul's 1989 debut, and laying down some of hip-hop's most sampled and imitated vocals, Caron Wheeler went solo. Three years after her *UK Blak* album, she's back and serving up real songs. Instead of of plastic Whitney-isms or dancing around with Gene Kelly in Coke commercials, she comes correct with an album where song craft dominates and new jack swing plays the back. Her voice is the main hook here, not breakbeats we've all heard before and corny "raps" designed to rook an inner city demographic out of its ducs.

The album has many producers but Wheeler oversees, resulting in a consistent sound and direction. Her maturation as an artist is evident when Jazzie B of Soul II Soul pops up on "Wonder" (with the same sound he gave her four years ago) and she steals the show. When Terry Lewis and Jimmy Jam hook up some Janet-like tracks for her, she brings intelligence and depth, not formulaic pop.

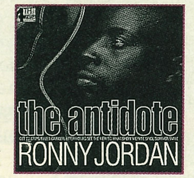
Dealing with thought-provoking subjects, she alludes to non-resident fathers ("Father"), LA's long hot summer ("Beach Of The War Goddess") and her belief that the AIDS virus was manufactured in a lab ("Lite As A Feather"). Wheeler's voice fluctuates, shifts, rises, lowers, twists and turns—without jocking Anita Baker. And in addition to incredible songwriting, Wheeler also continues to show affinity to hip-hop—remaking Jimi Hendrix's "Wind Cries Mary" without calling in some long-haired bum to record Jimi's riffs. True to the game, Wheeler instead samples his inimitable guitars and adds a little bass, live drum playing (courtesy of Living Colour's Will Calhoun) and a soul stirring vocal that actually improves on the original.

Intelligent Black women will love this album's lush melodies and deep thoughts; fellas will hear her voice and wish she were their girl.

RONIN RO

RONNY JORDAN

The Antidote
4th & B'way



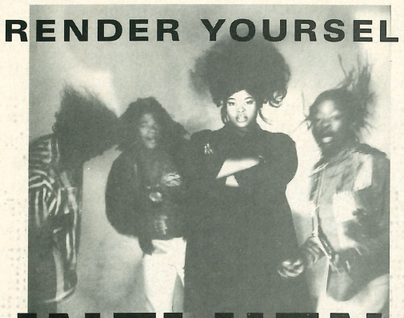
No, it's not hip-hop, but it's hip-hop influenced—it's contemporary jazz at its best and no hip-hopper can or will ever come close. Quest did a good job, Gang Starr had some good tracks, and Easy Mo Bee did some impressive work with the late great Miles Davis, but Ronny *plays* his basslines, pianos and horns, and has a mixture of fat drum samples and live drum beats. Inevitably rappers will be sampling from Ronny in the future, or maybe some will break down and let Ronny produce some hit records for them. A quick listen to "Blues Grinder," "Get To Grips," "After Hours," "Cool And Funky" and the remake of Miles Davis' "So What" will show you why he's got the antidote. VERNON PRESTON

LOUIE RANKIN

Showdown
Mesa

Louie Rankin may not take the dancehall world by storm, but this patois-slinging bad boy definitely licks some shots on his debut album. A DJ (read: MC) of note in New York's dancehall scene for some time, this transplanted Yardie—responsible for such 12-inch scorchers as "Typewriter" and "No Move"—finally gets to go the distance on the long play and lets loose a variety of styles. Producers King Jammy and Steelie & Clevie provide some solid computer riddims, but Louie's true potential seems to flow over the hip-hop flavored tracks such as "The Sting," the Trackmasterz remake of "Typewriter" featuring Red Hot Lover Lover Tone and the Bobby Konders-produced, "The Muscle." Louie gets 'nuff respect for the dues he has paid over the years, but when the showdown's over, you can be sure that more worthy challengers will surface in the battle for the dancehall crown. S.H. FERNANDO JR.

SURRENDER YOURSELF TO



D-INFLUENCE

good

the debut album 4 we

a triumph of mood over matter

Featuring "No Illusions," "Funny (How Things Change)" and "I'm The One"

Management: Bill Dern Management

eastwest records america

THE ATLANTIC GROUP

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attempts to squash the rumors and put the trife in check—both male and female. *In A Word Or 2* continues to vocalize her female perspective as she uses hip-hop and her British-accented flow to define and assert women's rights and issues in the face of a male dominated hip-hop culture.

This time Monie Love drops personal experience, such as her being a single mother, into the mix. On "4 Da Children" she addresses the fact that single women have the ability to raise children and must take full responsibility for their offspring.

While her work with Prince on this album will probably get the most media attention, it is through her relationship with

super producer/remixer/arranger Marley Marl that Monie comes correct and tackles tough issues of infidelity, safe sex, and society's gender roles. His hardcore, break-neck beats really shine. Although most of the songs contain a somewhat formulaic chorus-as-hook pattern, it merely works to persuade the listener to pay attention to her lyrical messages as they will stick in the mind long after the record ends.

All in all, Monie seems to be back on track, and with the Midas touch of Marley, she has delivered a solid album—filled with positive, pro-woman, pro-human lyrical politics. **BRETT JOHNSON**

NAUGHTY BY NATURE

19 Naughty III

Tommy Boy

Production: artist, S.I.D.

The Naughty boys are back, armed with a different style of rhyme and a new supply of beats. While Naughty is still the hardcore, not-to-be-fucked-with crew from Illtown, there is definitely a marked change from their last album. The seemingly omnipresent piano riffs on the debut LP have been replaced by average basslines and drum tracks. The beats, far from mediocre, at times do not match Treach's superior delivery.

Another change this year is the increased lyrical weight given to Vinnie. While he doesn't possess the amount of skills Treach has (but then again, who does?), he manages to handle his place behind the mic.

Still, Naughty remains consistent to the underground-but-accessible style they carved out for themselves. Naughty defi-

nitely doesn't fake the funk on standout cuts like "Ready For Dem," a fat joint featuring Heavy D, and "Hot Potato," an obese track featuring the militant mack of hip-hop, Freddie Foxxx (Freddie and Treach are two MCs whose styles definitely complement each other). Another can't miss is "Knock 'Em Out The Box," which utilizes the familiar Slick Rick loop.

While the production on the album left me wanting something more innovative, this record will still be a bonus to the collection of any hip-hop fan. Although Naughty's sophomore effort isn't at the level of sophomore efforts by groups such as A Tribe Called Quest or De La Soul, Naughty's base of fans—and that's a large base—shouldn't be disappointed. Based on the success of "Hip-Hop Hooray," it looks like platinum all over again for Treach, Vinnie and Kaygee. **THE DERELICT TODD B.**

GIGOLO TONY & THE GHETTO SOLDIERS

Living In A Concrete Jungle

Skyy Records

Production: artist, Captain D

As a dues-paying veteran of the Miami rap scene, Gigolo Tony has built up a respectable following over the years. Those who are really up on things may remember him as the "father of Roxanne." But with regards to his latest release, it is safe to say that "you can't teach an old dog new tricks." For Tony, little has changed since the days of Miami's Old School era. While he makes efforts to balance his sex rhymes with topics of a political and social nature, his lyrics remain far from complex, and his style, voice and accent remind you of Willie D. And while his back up voices, the Ghetto Soldiers, add some spice to the lyrics, their contributions are far from rewind material.

The bass is heavy and that makes the album listenable. The quads and 808 are used nicely, and those who like a lot of knock should find the album worthwhile. Unlike most bass records, the majority of the jams are not in the fast-paced Miami style, and that may prove to be a mistake since the album's best cuts, "Jam Y'all" and "The Whipp," each check in at well over 120 beats per minute. All in all, Tony should do well with some fans in cities like Detroit and Atlanta, but heads who require more than bass to satisfy their listening needs will probably turn their attentions elsewhere. **J-MILL**

STRICKLY ROOTS

Begs No Friends

Friends Connection

Production: DJ Fashion, Professor Que

The Bronx underground continues to bubble with activity. Making noise on the

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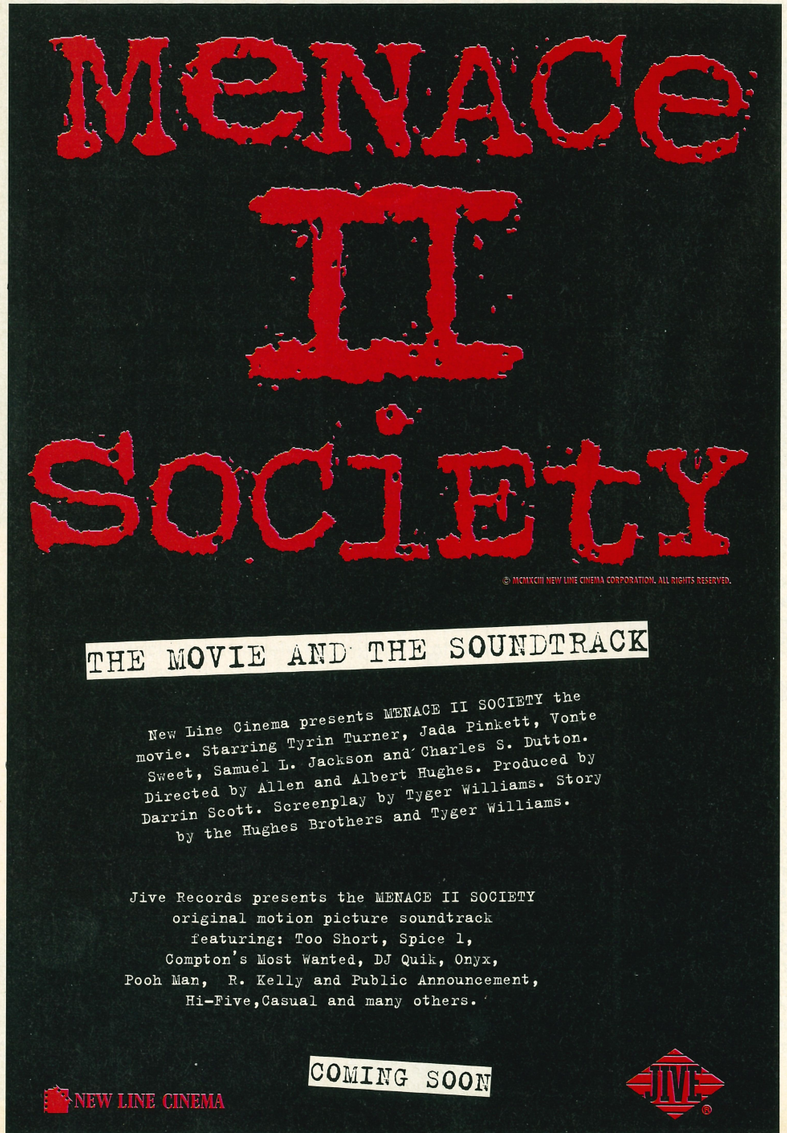


sure shots singles

ILLEGAL

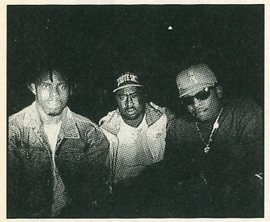
ILLEGAL

"Head Or Gut"
Rowdy Records
Production: Erick Sermon

There's been a lot of young kids getting on the mic lately, but you've never heard anything like this. These Atlanta based whipper-snappers care nothing about being pop stars or even positive role models, they just want to rock the mic. And while similar groups front like they are younger than they really are, 13-year-old Jamal and 14-year-old Malik are clearly the ones to put your money on.

Never have any kids gotten so open on the mic (even Erick Sermon's mouth-watering funk track plays the back on this one). They kick the quick tongue style so hard that they immediately go to the head of the class. And their subject matter is as ruff as their rhymes; strictly sex, violence and hardcore crime. "I may be young but I'm quick to smoke a nigga/Ya wanna play me G, ya playing wit da joka nigga."

You might want to keep an eye out for this, because even though they are livin' foul, these young guns have the potential to make a lot of people put the mic down for good.



THE GETO BOYS

THE GETO BOYS

"Crooked Officer"
Rap-A-Lot
Production: Joe Johnson, Beto and James Smith

As long as the police continue to harass young Black men, there will always be a need and an audience for records of this nature. With "Crooked Officer," The Geto Boys draw some blood in the war against all corrupt "blue suits, black suits, white suits and state troops."

Mr. Scarface, Bushwick Bill and new group member Big Mike all get loose over a funk-filled track that sounds more like old Meter's soul than the traditional 5th Ward dope that we have grown accustomed to. And as the mic is passed, the cards are pulled. 'Face sets it off lovely with his chilling delivery: "I'm lettin' freedom ring/From the hole in my Glock for fuckin' up Rodney King." But in terms of sheer mic control, the best performance comes from Big Mike, who really gets tricky with the lyrical flow. Not since the days of Raheem and Prince Johnny C have the Geto Boys had such a flavorful line up. You can bet that they will be taking more than badges when the new LP drops.

WU-TANG CLAN

WU-TANG CLAN

"Protect Ya Neck"
Wu-Tang Records
Production: Prince Rakeem

When you get a deal, release a record, and aren't satisfied with the way your product is marketed and promoted, then it's time to take it back to the streets and take matters into your own hands, which is exactly what these two cousins from Staten Island did. Prince Rakeem, formerly on Tommy Boy Records, and his cousin The Genius, formerly on Cold Chillin' (or Cold Killin' as Genius calls it), united with a family of up and comers from around their way and put out their own 12-inch.

The Wu-Tang Clan is packed with flavor MCs, all bringing a unique style to the cutting edge of underground hip-hop. You might get lost trying to identify every rapper in the song (Shallah Raekwon, Method Man, U-God, Ol' Dirty Bastard, Ghost Face Killer, Prince Rakeem, The RZA, The Genius), but one thing's for sure, there's plenty of dope styles to get into.

After everybody represents, Genius takes us outta here with an all out lyrical assault on record company execs who are "so stingy, they got short arms and deep pockets," and who know nothing about rap music: "First of all, who's your A&R/A mountain climber who plays an electric guitar?"

RUNAWAY SLAVES

RUNAWAY SLAVES

"Booty Mission (Yo Yo Where The Ho's At?)"
Savage Records
Production: artist

A bouncy, danceable track lays the foundation for the A-side of the Runaway Slaves' debut single "Booty Mission (Yo Yo Where The Ho's At?)," while the B-side offers a slower, head-nodding mix. Don't be fooled by the trite title, these kids from the Baltimore/Washington D.C. area have a very current, cutting-egde lyrical and production style that easily makes the transition from booty shaking bumps to hardcore funk.

Originally released as an instrumental track, this cut became an underground smash in their local market, which led to the deal with Savage and the re-release of the single. Rappers Fla-Fla, Fat S.A.C. and Ty-Flex trade solid rhymes about partying, the good life and the perennial search for good women: "I have the fever for the flavor of a blunt/ Or maybe it's the fever for the flavor of a stunt." But staying true to their name, the Runaway Slaves' press kit offers a Black History lesson about "great Black Americans that escaped slavery then and now." While the A-side has real hit potential with its catchy hook, some heads might prefer the gritty comfort of the flip.

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D-L is Strickly Roots, a group that definitely represents with their nine-track independent debut. Don't let the name fool you though, because RMR and Luva Don definitely kick the freestyle flavor over creeping hip-hop beats and basslines that run deeper than Manhattan subway tunnels.

The underground smash, "Duck Da Boyz"—a timely video and single about police brutality—is guaranteed to open up the Alpines. And on the dancehall tip, the patois slang laces joints like "Get N Open," and "King A New York," resulting in a true rap/reggae fusion. Relying on few samples, eerie sounds, and solid drum and bass grooves, this duo come correct for all Boogie Down bad boys.

S.H. FERNANDO JR.

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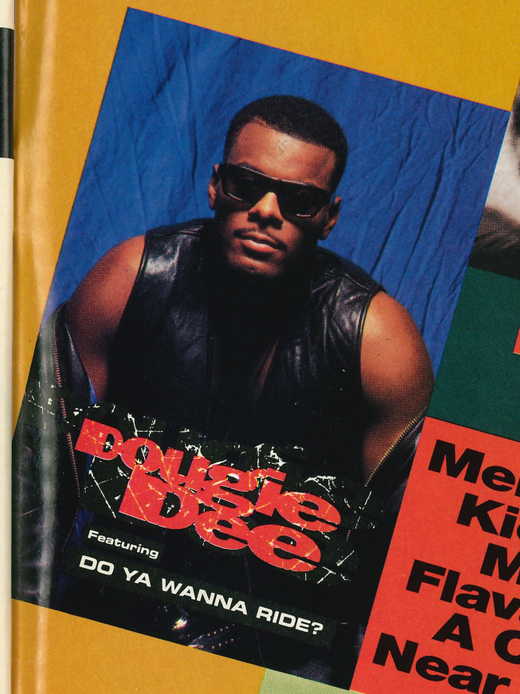

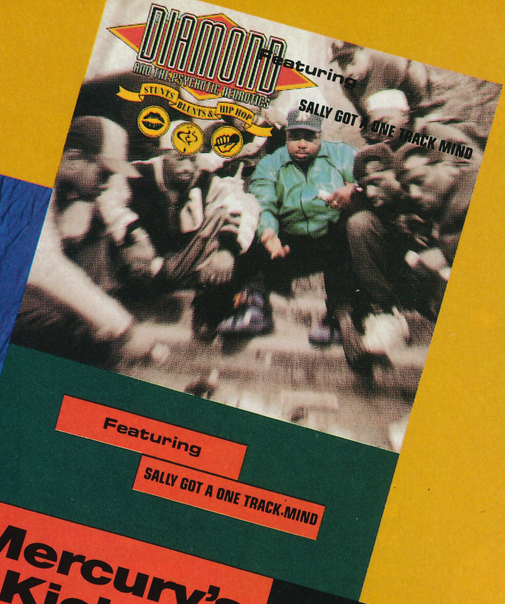

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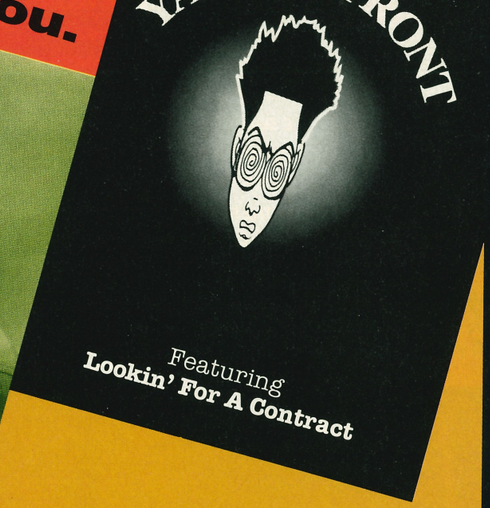

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900 FRAMES

KOI SOJER/SNAP-N-U

CARLOS FELIZ

1 RUN, DMC AND PARIS CHILL IN HARLEM AT THE VIDEO SHOOT FOR "DOWN WITH THE KING," SHOT BY 900 FRAMES **2** LORD JAMAR, SADAT X AND FRIENDS MAKE THE SCENE AT THE RUSH MANAGEMENT PARTY IN NYC **3** AT A RAP CLUB IN YOKOHAMA, JAPAN CALLED GLAM SLAM, THIS DARK-SKINNED JAPANESE(!) HONEY SHOWS THE BOOM-BIP **4** HEATHER B AND KENNY PARKER GET WRECK AT WETLANDS IN NYC **5** BOSS—A REAL FEMALE HARD-ROCK—TAKES A PUFF AT THE DEF JAM X-MAS PARTY **6** CL SMOOTH COOLS OFF THE OAKTOWN CROWD AT THE STOP THE VIOLENCE/ INCREASE THE PEACE CONCERT **7** A JAPANESE HIP-HOP DANCER ROCKS THE TLC STYLE **8** SEAN E MACK, ICE T AND SEAN E SEAN AT ONE STEP BEYOND IN SANTA CLARA, CA **9** EAZY E SPORTS THE MAD 'FRO AT THE RUN-DMC VIDEO SHOOT **10** ILL CREW IN THE STUDIO: (FROM BOTTOM LEFT) JAM MASTER JAY, SONNY SUAVE, FREDRO, BIGGIE SMALLS, VINNIE, TREACH, STICKY FINGERS AND KAY GEE WORK ON A CUT FOR THE *WHO'S THE MAN* SOUNDTRACK **11** POSITIVE K TURNS OUT THE APOLLO, UPTOWN NYC

KOI SOJER/SNAP-N-U

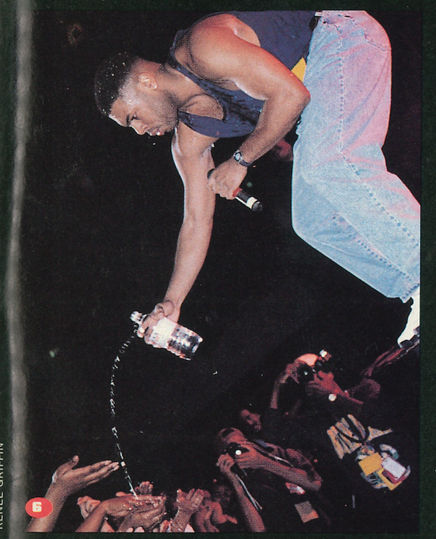
COLIN

RENEE GRIFFIN

LISA LEONE

FISH

COLIN



RENEE GRIFFIN

KOI SOJER

THE RAP BANDIT

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT HIP-HOP BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK. . .

Q: Do you know how tall and how old Eric "Eazy E" Wright is? B.L. *Alameda, CA*

A: No, because those were the only two things Dr. Dre didn't reveal in "Bitches Ain't Shit."

Q: What happened to MC Shan? E.O. *St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands*

A: I've seen Shan twice in the past two years. First as a waiter in the Steve Martin movie *L.A. Story*, and most recently in Snow's video, "Informer." What's next, a guest spot on "Sally Jesse Raphael"?

Q: Do rappers ever get mad at you for what you say in your answers? B.R. *Pasco, WA*

A: Boy do they ever. They bitch, moan, and even threaten violence. But mostly, I enjoy good relations with today's rap stars, some of whom even go out of their way to please me. Speaking of which, I wonder why it's taking so long for the Young Black Teenagers to get back from the supermarket with my groceries.

Q: Why do people call me a sell-out when I tell them I don't like Public Enemy's music? D.L. *Louisville, KY*

A: Because P.E. gets props like Cooperstown. In fact, when they do start a Rap Hall of Fame, I'm sure Public Enemy will be among the first inductees, right up there with Run-DMC, Grandmaster Flash and Anthrax.

Q: Please help me solve a big problem between me and my brother. Ten dollars is riding on this answer. Are Redman and K-Solo the same person? E.L. *Uhrichsville, OH*

A: No, they're not. Which is typical, because nothing is the same with the Hit Squad these days.

Q: Now that Cool C and DJ Eaze have teamed up with Steady B, do you think they'll receive any props? D.K. *Philadelphia, PA*

A: Well, C.E.B. is large in Philly. But then again, so is Schoolly D.

Q: I got a crazy and hyped guess-nick question that might damn near make a dead funk sample have an 808 bass drum erection. Is it possible that I can get a tape of those St. Ides rap commercials? X.M.R. *Cleveland, OH*

A: I saw on TV that St. Ides was, in fact, distributing free tapes to youngsters in the St. Louis area, but that promotion is over. Good news, though: their newest campaign will include giving out free brown bags to area elementary schools.

Q: I know that Pete Rock has the hard-to-find E-MU SP-1200 drum machine/sampler and a set of Technics SL-1200 turntables in his world famous "basement," but what else does he have to work with? T.K. *Columbus, MS*

A: Nothing fancy, just the usual DJ necessities. You know mixer, record crates, autographed picture of Dick Gregory.

Q: When will rap's most outstanding female group, J.J. Fad, put out another album? I'm sick and tired of waiting. A.D. *Hazel Crest, IL*

A: As soon as rap's hottest male group, UTFO, settles that nagging "Cop Killer" controversy.

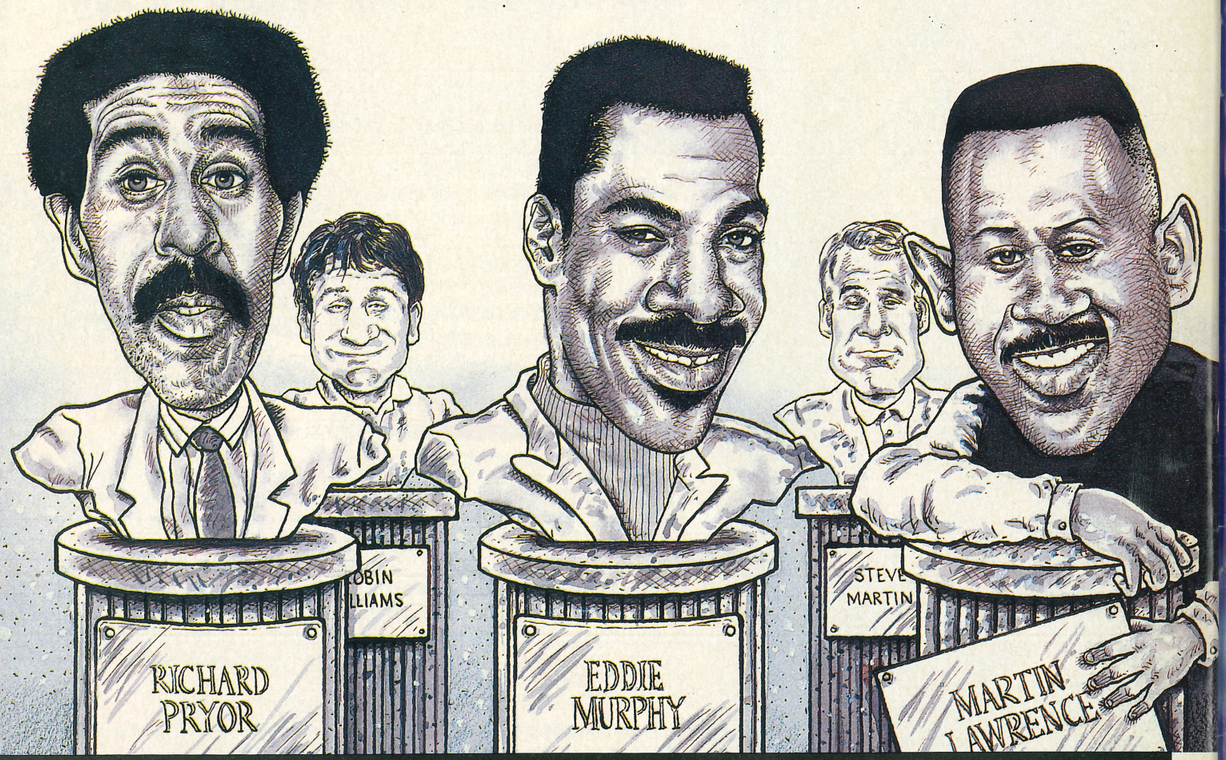
ILLUSTRATION BY TODD JAMES

GOT A BURNING QUESTION ABOUT HIP-HOP? SEND IT TO:
THE RAP BANDIT, P.O. BOX 48382, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19144

THE LAST WORD

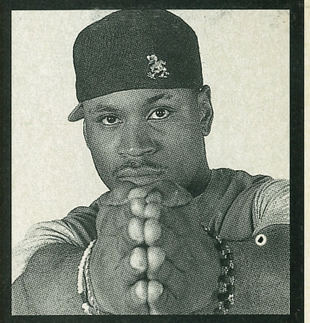
BY ANDRE LEROY DAVIS

COMEDY HALL OF FAME: *Who's Next?*



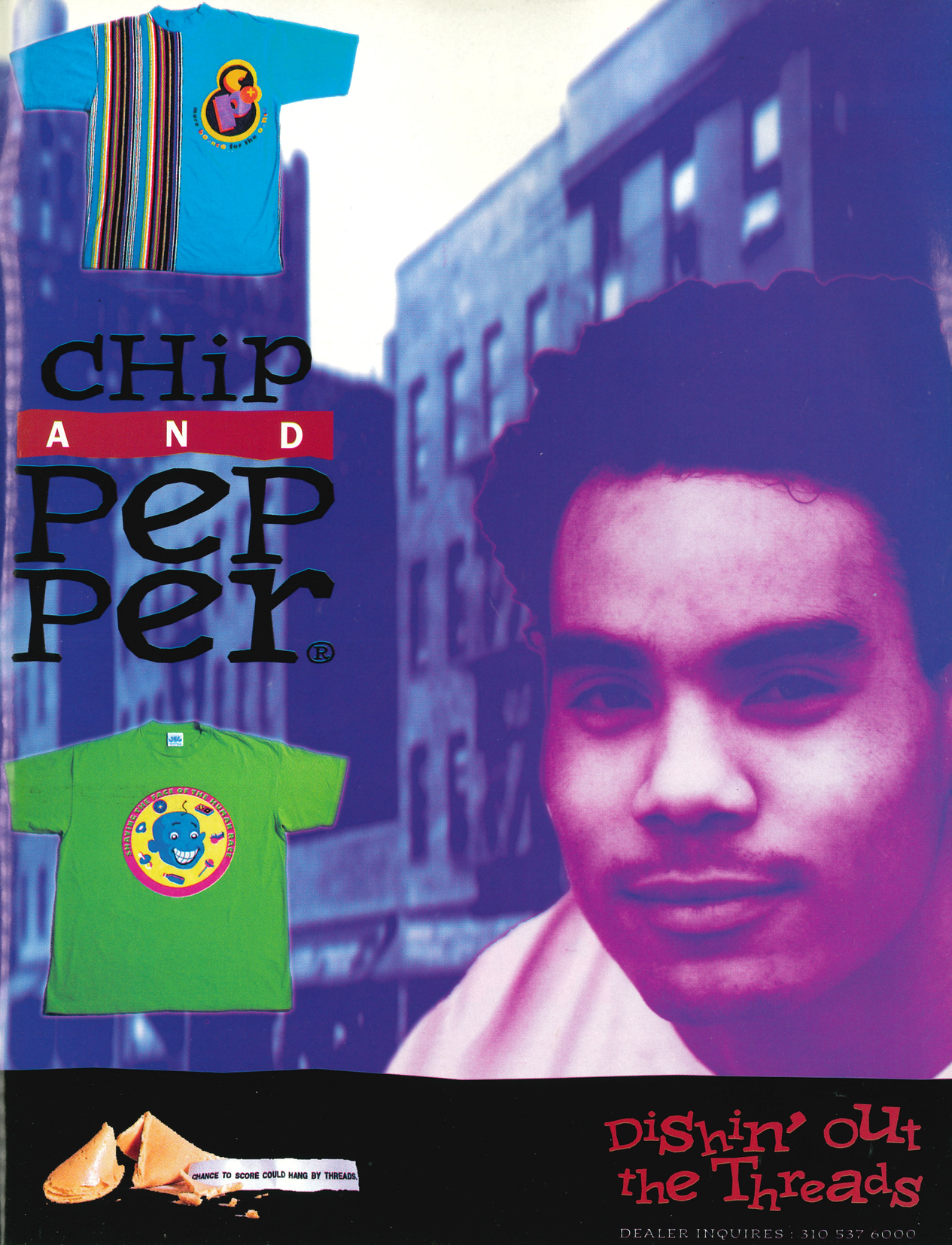
COMIN' AT YA IN MAY

2 PAC: Who got more juice than 2Pac? This talented rhymer and actor has made his mark on records and in hit films (including the soon-to-be-released John Singleton project *Poetic Justice*), but he never seems to escape the stormy eye of controversy. Fights, Dan Quayle, radical politics—it's all part of 2Pac's story, and you'll get an unbiased report in the next issue of THE SOURCE.



WHO'S THE MAN: What do you get when you mix the antics of Doctor Dre and Ed Lover with a virtual who's-who of the Hip-Hop Nation and put the whole thing down on film? You get *Who's The Man*, the blockbuster big screen debut starring the Yo! MTV Raps hosts as un-talented barbers who decide to become police officers. It's a comedy with serious undertones, and you'd better not blink or you'll miss a guest appearance from the likes of KRS-One, Heavy D, B-Real, Salt 'N Pepa, Bushwick Bill, Naughty By Nature and many more. Read all about the behind-the-scenes goings on next month.

PLUS: a new album from LL Cool J, Ice T's controversial *Home Invasion* album hits the streets (to be released on that stomping-ground for controversial rap music, Priority Records), the Geto Boys get back on that hard stuff, and Pete Nice and Daddy Rich take it to ya head with a new LP.



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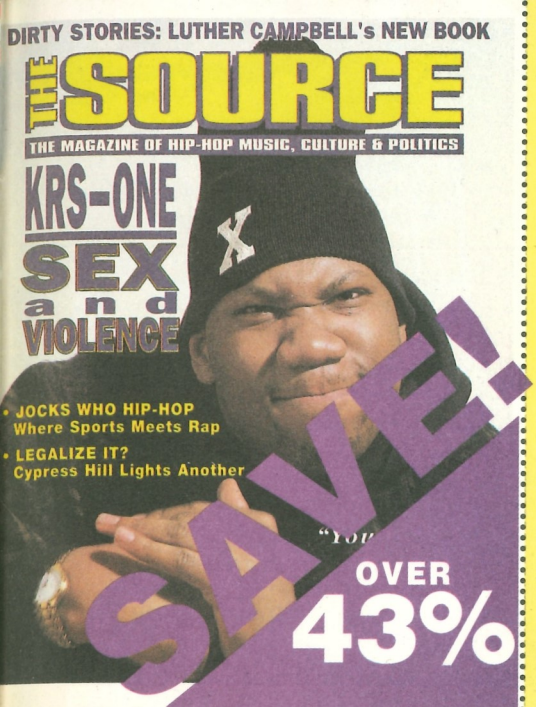

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